

BOOK REVIEWS

Tanak: A Theological and Critical Introduction to the Jewish Bible. By Marvin A. Sweeney. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012, xv + 544 p., \$59.00.

In *Tanak: A Theological and Critical Introduction to the Jewish Bible*, Marvin A. Sweeney (Professor of Hebrew Bible at Claremont School of Theology) “proposes a systematic critical and theological study of the Jewish Bible” (p. 4).

Part I, “Introduction,” provides the methodological foundation for the book. Sweeney clearly states his approach to reading the Hebrew Bible. First, it is critical in that he “draws heavily on modern critical study of the Bible” (p. 4). Second, it is theological in that “it attempts to discern the theological viewpoints articulated by the biblical texts...[and] it includes dialogue with the Jewish tradition at large” (p. 4).

After surveying Jewish and Christian approaches to biblical theology, Sweeney contends that “the task of a Jewish biblical theology cannot be the same as that of...a Christian biblical theology” (p. 20). He argues that a distinctively Jewish biblical theology should include several key elements: adherence to the tripartite structure of the Tanak; interpretation of the Tanak in relation to the entirety of Jewish tradition; attention to the entirety of the Tanak rather than privileging certain portions over others; and recognition of the dialogical character of the Tanak as expressed through intertextuality. A Jewish biblical theology, therefore, engages the Tanak firsthand with respect to both synchronic and diachronic dimensions but also establishes an ongoing dialogue concerning God, the Jewish people, and the rest of the world.

Parts II through IV discuss the content proper of the Hebrew Bible. In keeping with his goal to produce an introduction to the Jewish Bible, Sweeney follows the order of the Jewish canon rather than the Christian canon. His discussion of each canonical division begins with a brief overview of the division followed by a detailed précis of each of the biblical books and their individual literary units.

Part II summarizes the content of Torah. Sweeney contends that the Torah is concerned with articulating the ideal relationship between God and the Jewish people within the context of God’s creation. The Torah expresses this primarily through divine instruction, whether in the form of a metanarrative of Israel’s origins (e.g. the account of the exodus) or in the form of law (e.g. the Decalogue).

In Parts IIIA, “The Former Prophets,” and IIIB, “The Latter Prophets,” Sweeney surveys the contents of the Prophets (*Nevi'im*). According to Sweeney, both the Former and Latter Prophets articulate the disruption of the ideal relationship expressed in the Torah. The Former Prophets do so by tracing the histories of Israel and Judah, demonstrating that both nations failed to adhere to God’s expectations of the people as expressed in Torah; the Latter Prophets likewise attempt to

explain the exile in light of the people's failure to adhere to Torah, but they also outline God's plans to reestablish the ideal relationship expressed in Torah.

Part IV treats the Writings (*Ketuvim*). According to Sweeney, no compelling diachronic model exists for understanding the composition of the Writings as a distinct and coherent segment of the Tanak. However, the Writings do have a clear synchronic function within the Tanak: they are concerned with articulating the restoration of the Torah's ideal relationship in the aftermath of the exile, although each book of the Writings does so in different ways.

In Part V ("Conclusion"), Sweeney offers some final thoughts: biblical theology is a valid enterprise for Jews, the Jewish version of the Bible (i.e. the Tanak) is the foundation of Judaism, the Jewish Bible as a whole does not represent a consistent viewpoint concerning God, and Judaism is in dialogue with its various constituent movements as well as non-Jewish religious movements. The book ends with a bibliography, an index of authors cited, and an index of subjects.

Tanak possesses several strengths. Sweeney's survey of the history of biblical theology, particularly developments that have taken place since the Holocaust, is illuminating. Scholars will benefit from his defense of biblical theology and his discussion of how biblical theology might be practiced from a Jewish perspective. Sweeney's analysis of the biblical text contains a number of helpful insights throughout (e.g. the idea that the *toledot*-formula provides the literary structure for the entire Torah, expanded upon by one of Sweeney's former doctoral students: Matthew A. Thomas, *These Are the Generations: Identity, Covenant, and the Toledot Formula* [LHBOTS 551; London: T&T Clark, 2010]).

On the other hand, Sweeney's *Tanak* contains at least three significant shortcomings that detract from its value. First, Sweeney's discussion of the content of the biblical text can be somewhat tedious. Sweeney traverses through the Hebrew Bible literary unit by literary unit, providing a detailed précis of each one. Much good information can be found in each précis, but often Sweeney's discussion amounts to little more than a recounting of the biblical text in his own words. This is unnecessary, and Sweeney's presentation of each unit would benefit from additional synthesis.

Second, because he does not always devote enough time to synthesis of the Hebrew Bible's content, at times Sweeney does not clearly and convincingly express how exactly the individual books of the Prophets and Writings—especially the latter—relate to the ideal relationship expressed in Torah. This is unfortunate, because describing the expression of Torah in the Prophets and Writings is a crucial part of Sweeney's efforts to read the Tanak in light of Jewish thought.

Third, and perhaps the most problematic of all, this volume does not follow through on all of its objectives. As noted above, Sweeney states that *Tanak* is meant to be "theological insofar as it includes dialogue with the Jewish tradition at large" (p. 4). Such dialogue, however, is largely absent from the book. Yes, Sweeney follows the order of the Jewish rather than Christian canon, paying attention to the possible implications of its arrangement for Jewish interpretation; yes, Sweeney discusses Jewish traditions surrounding the authorship of many of the biblical books; and yes, Sweeney provides interesting tidbits here and there regarding the

importance of a particular text for Judaism (e.g. Gen 2:4 and Shabbat). Often, however, Sweeney does not adequately dialogue with Jewish tradition. A casual glance at the index of authors reveals that great Jewish thinkers such as Rashi, Moses Maimonides, David Kimchi, and Abraham Heschel are rarely mentioned and are given far less attention than non-Jewish scholars. In sum, there is little in-depth interaction with Jewish thought in Sweeney's discussion of the biblical text.

Sweeney is an excellent scholar and has made many valuable contributions to the study of the Hebrew Bible, but *Tanakh* falls somewhat short of the caliber of his other works. Those who are interested in reading another critical introduction of the Hebrew Bible will probably want to get this book, but those looking for a thoroughly Jewish reading of the text will be disappointed.

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Old Testament Theology: Reading the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture. By R. W. L. Moberly. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013, 352 pp., \$34.99.

Fifteen years ago, R. W. L. Moberly expressed his desire for a new direction in the practice of OT theology. For him, the time had come for a *via media* that took seriously interpreting the OT both in the context of the Christian canon (Childs) and in a way that took seriously the need for contemporary relevance, à la Brueggemann ("OT Theology," in *The Face of OT Studies* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999]). This current work is his second recent foray into this theological arena, the first being his groundbreaking *Theology of Genesis* published in 2009 by Cambridge University Press. In the book's preface, Moberly flatly states he is trying "to model a way of doing Old Testament theology that is built around a dialectic between ancient text and contemporary questions, within a Christian frame of reference that is alert to other frames of reference," which for Moberly are primarily Jewish frames of reference (p. ix).

Rather than the usual comprehensive approach covering all the Tanakh, Moberly selects eight passages from the Law, Prophets, and Writings that in his view represent some of the chief concerns of Israel's Scriptures (p. 1). These concerns include many of the standard topics in OT theology such as God, election, idolatry, monotheism, covenant, torah, prophecy, wisdom, and psalms (p. 1). Though each topic can be read alone, the author suggests each chapter be read in sequence for a cumulative hearing of the significant voices in OT theology and a clearer understanding of the hermeneutical proposals (p. 4).

Moberly points to the hermeneutical focus reflected in his book's subtitle "Reading the Hebrew Bible *as* Christian Scripture," by stressing both the need to understand the Hebrew Bible as a Jewish compilation that preceded Christianity while still embracing the reality that these Jewish Scriptures were received by early Christianity and function as authoritative Scripture for the church. While he recognizes that reading the text as Christian Scripture is not the concern of all scholars,

he is hopeful that a well-carried-out reading of this sort will still provide illumination to interpreters outside the Christian camp.

Chapter titles include: (1) "A Love Supreme"; (2) "A Chosen People"; (3) "Daily Bread"; (4) "Does God Change?"; (5) "Isaiah and Jesus"; (6) "Educating Jonah"; (7) "Faith and Perplexity"; (8) "Where is Wisdom?" These are followed by an epilogue, which helpfully distills the main theological point made in each chapter. The main body of the book is followed by a comprehensive twenty-page bibliography and the usual author and Scripture indices.

For Moberly, the first five chapters of his work provide the doctrinal foundation for Israel's vision of God and life lived out in the divine presence while the next three topics wrestle with perennial problems in our human response to God (p. 281). Within each chapter, smaller font is used to discuss in more detail topics related to his main argument (p. 5).

The author's chapter on "Isaiah and Jesus" (chap. 5) provides one sample window into the methodological world of this book. Moberly acknowledges the central role that the book of Isaiah has played as a witness to Jesus as the Christ. To evaluate historic Christianity's appropriation of Isaiah, the first part of the chapter discusses the "principal issues" raised by such an approach. After noting the obscure nature of Isaiah's prophecy such that some of the Church fathers (e.g. Augustine) had trouble understanding the Christological focus of passages in Isaiah, Moberly recites the standard critical view that Hebrew prophecy has been found to be primarily forthtelling and concerned with the immediate response of the hearer to Yahweh's word. "Within the world of the text, the Jesus of the Gospels is not envisaged" and the Jewish objections to the use of Isaiah's prophecy as pointing to Christ are valid (p. 151).

The next section of the chapter critiques the classical long-term prediction and fulfillment understanding of prophecy by interacting with the works of evangelical scholars Oswalt, Motyer, and Kaiser. Moberly charges them with failing to distinguish the literary conventions in the text and ignoring the major conceptual debates about the supernatural in relationship to the world uncovered by the social and natural sciences (pp. 152–53). After rejecting traditional views of prophecy and fulfillment, the author oddly discusses and finds lacking the prediction-fulfillment mathematical computer models made famous by Drosnin in his work *The Bible Code*. Again, he chastises Drosnin and others of his ilk for not taking into account the results of scholarly studies on the language and history of prophecy in the Hebrew Bible (p. 154). Though he clearly accepts the historical-critical consensus on the formation and interpretation of Isaiah, Moberly does not despair, because the book of Isaiah can still find its Christological voice by reading it in the literary context of the Christian canon. For Moberly, "To claim that the meaning of Israel's scriptures may vary according to context is not a matter of special pleading by the Christian theologian, but a recognition of certain facets of the nature of texts as texts" (p. 158).

In the final section of the chapter, Moberly attempts a selective reading of Isaiah focusing on the theme of "exaltation and abasement" centered around Yahweh's activity found in Isaiah (e.g. Isaiah 2). The Lord exalts those who display the

moral qualities of God himself, such as the faithful Davidic king and the Lord's servant. This theme carries over into the NT in the words and character of Jesus (Matt 23:12; Phil 2:10–11).

The author should be applauded for his call for OT theologians to move their exegetical efforts beyond the historical meaning (the world behind the text), to concentrate in canonical context(s) on the world within the text, for the purpose of ultimately applying the word to the world in front of the text (i.e. to make contemporary application). Moberly's exegetical work is also quite good. His discussion of the proper translation and meaning of the *Shema* (chap. 1) reveals thorough philological and syntactical research and takes into account all the main views. His diachronic readings beginning with a historical-critical reading and culminating in a canonical interpretation are always illuminating and instructive.

While there are some positives in Moberly's approach, his work raises a number of concerns as well. First, with regard to the scope of OT theology and despite the enthusiasm of Moberly's claim otherwise, can detailed diachronic work on representative texts ever really encompass the unity and diversity of the OT canon as, for example, the more comprehensive theologies penned in recent days by the likes of Walke or Goldingay at least attempt to do? Surely, William Dyrness's much earlier work on *Themes in OT Theology*, for all its strengths in exploring the major topics in the OT, suffered from the same weakness.

Second, evangelicals with a high view of Scripture will be wary of Moberly's easy acceptance and embrace of the assured results of higher criticism, so evident in his work on Isaiah and his critique of a classical evangelical approach to prophecy, prediction, and fulfillment. Prophetic texts make claims about the nature of ultimate reality that cannot be easily dismissed by reducing their statements to mere literary convention or reinterpreting them in light of current scientific issues.

Third, Moberly's approach to a diachronic canonical reading seems more akin to the method of James Sanders (vs. Childs) who argues for a canonical-critical method that celebrates the readings of successive communities of faith and has no interest in a single authoritative reading based on a received text that has religious authority for a specific community of faith, namely Christian (cf. Sanders, *Canon and Community*). If we as evangelicals accept Moberly's call to relegate interpreting the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture to "reading AS" rather than "reading IS," are we not jettisoning the binding authority of the text and conceding that the Christian reading is simply one reading among many with no more and no less authority than a comparative religions interpretation or one by a practicing Jewish scholar? Are we ready to concede that Advent readings of Isaiah are merely an exercise in Christian "imagination" (pp. 147, 151)?

Finally, one might question Moberly's thematic selections. Is the motif of "exaltation and abasement" really as central to the book of Isaiah as the author suggests? It seems a substantial case could be made that Isaiah as a book highlights Davidic covenant messianic concerns that mediate the establishment of God's rule over Israel and the nations that are made sure by God's power to affect history.

Despite these reservations, Moberly's work is a must-read of a moderate critic who commendably, in the tradition of Childs, is striving to read the Hebrew Bible

as Christian Scripture and make it applicable to the church in the early twenty-first century.

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The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible. 2 vols. Edited by Michael D. Coogan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, xxx + 600 pp., xii + 578 pp., \$395.00.

This thorough and interesting work includes extended articles on every book included in any of the historical canons of the Jewish or Christian Scriptures, along with articles on important introductory issues and on important writings that reflect the early reception history of the biblical writings, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, the OT Pseudepigrapha, the NT Pseudepigrapha, the Nag Hammadi Library, Targumim, and some writings of the Apostolic Fathers; as well as general essays on early Syriac, Greek, and Latin versions and on various literary genres, among others. English translations also get an entry, which stands out from the rest by the modern and culturally-specific nature of the corpus.

The first volume begins with a list of articles included in both volumes (they are in alphabetical order), a list of maps and charts (also for both volumes), and a four-page chart comparing the biblical canons of various religious traditions. Then there is a brief preface by the editor-in-chief, explaining the plan and orientation of the work. At the conclusion of the articles in the second volume, the reader is presented with a topical outline of contents, a directory of contributors, and an extended (94-page) index.

The preface explains that contributors on individual books were to follow a basic template as far as it would be appropriate for the material, including: (1) name(s) of book and its (their) meaning in English, and Hebrew and Greek as applicable; (2) canonical status and relation to canonical books or elements of those books; (3) authorship, both traditional attribution (Jewish and Christian, as relevant) and modern scholarly views; (4) date(s) of composition and historical context(s); (5) literary history; (6) structure and contents; (7) interpretation: what the book meant to its author(s) and audience(s) at the stages of its development, and how later readers and commentators have interpreted it; (8) reception history: how the book has been used in various media and genres, and other influence it has had; and (9) bibliography.

This two-volume work includes both less and more than what would normally be found in a typical Bible encyclopedia—less in that it does not deal with theological or cultural topics, but more in that the articles are much longer and in that it gives attention to reception history and to various types of literature relevant to the reception history. Also, unlike most encyclopedias, many of the bibliographies are helpfully annotated.

Most of the authors are well known in their fields and some are generally considered the most authoritative scholars on the topic (e.g. Tov on textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Roysse on textual criticism of the NT). Some evangelicals

are included in the mix of authors, including (among others) Stanley Porter on “Canon: NT,” M. Daniel Carroll R. on “Amos,” and Craig Evans on “Canon: Overview.” With respect to questions of special introduction, the most common critical views on authorship and composition are represented throughout. Naturally, readers will not find here a defense of traditional positions favored by most evangelicals, but will find generally clear and concise overviews of views widely accepted within the academy.

Spot checking some essays for what is included or omitted from discussions of the reception history of various books brings some interesting results. Discussions give appropriate attention to many of the rich, positive cultural contributions flowing from various books. The negative side of scriptural reception history is given inconsistent attention. For example, the essay on Ephesians does not mention slavery under “contribution.” Marriage is mentioned in the same essay, but without specific indication of how Ephesians has influenced views of marriage through history. The essay on Colossians does mention that the letter’s household code “gained importance later, in discussions on the role of women and the institution of slavery” (1:138). The essay on the Gospel of John mentions “its most tragic aspect: its language toward ‘the Jews’ as part of anti-Semitism” (1:469). It also points out ways in which that legacy was muted by some important figures in history. The essay on Joshua jumps directly from Augustine’s concerns about the ambush of the inhabitants of Ai and early Jewish readers’ discomfort with the sanctioned killing in the book to modern Zionist claims about the land, passing over any reference to early colonizers of the Americas and the influence of Joshua’s narrative on some of their attitudes towards indigenous populations.

Naturally, given the time it takes to prepare and publish such a work, some of the entries are already slightly dated. For example, in the essay on the textual criticism of the NT, we are told that the most recent edition of the Nestle-Aland text is the 27th (2:401) and there is no mention of the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (CBGM). But these are extremely recent developments and it may not even be fair to mention them.

This work will serve as an excellent resource for students or academics in other fields (or all those who are academically inclined) who are looking for a first-rate, one-stop overview of the state of critical scholarship on the literature covered in these volumes.

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Exploring the Religion of Ancient Israel: Priest, Prophet, Sage and People. By Aaron Chalmers. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012, xv + 159 pp., \$30.00.

Exploring the Religion of Ancient Israel provides a concise introduction to the social and religious world of priests, prophets, sages, and everyday people in pre-exilic Israel. Information for this introduction is gleaned from the biblical text, archaeological remains, and ANE documents. The role of the latter two sources is correc-

tive and supplementary to the biblical text; that is, Chalmers believes that “these sources will help to supplement the picture provided by the biblical text, shedding light on aspects of religious beliefs and practices that were *overlooked* or even *distorted* by the authors of the biblical text itself” (p. 14; emphasis added). Thus, Chalmers clearly presents his work as a strictly historical work about the social world of priests, prophets, and sages, in contrast to one that would be concerned with how the biblical text interprets these offices. For example, he states that a correct understanding of the role of the king in the religious life of the nation will require the reader to approach the text indirectly, that is, “reading between the lines, focusing on that which is implicit, and considering common ANE practice” (p. 90). Chalmers accomplishes such a re-creation of the world of ancient Israel by collecting and summarizing a wide array of information and presenting it in a user-friendly way, including a number of illustrations, figures, maps, and information panels.

After summarizing in chapter 1 the three main sources—biblical text, ANE texts, archaeology—for reconstructing the social and religious world of ancient Israel, the book contains four chapters on priests, prophets, the wise, and the common people. There is also an excursus on the role of kings in this religious world. Despite being an introductory book, Chalmers provides enough information regarding sources and scholarship to demonstrate that he has a mastery of this material. Moreover, he has aptly taken difficult material and summarized it well for the beginning student and non-specialist. This reviewer would commend it to those who have very little exposure to such a historical endeavor and to those who have little exposure to the ANE documents and archaeology.

At the same time, the student and lay reader should be cautious to remember that the purpose of the book is to elucidate not the text but to elucidate the external world in which the text was written. Chalmers begins his study with what might seem a fitting comparison, proposing that the student of Scripture is analogous to the reader of *The Lord of the Rings* or *Pride and Prejudice*, who would need to become familiar with the characters in order to have a full appreciation for the story (pp. 1–2). In like manner, the reader of Scripture must have an idea of the characters involved, namely the prophets, priests, sages, and common people of the nation. While understanding the basic thrust of this and in full recognition that all such comparisons break down at some point, the analogy and Chalmers’s application of it become fuzzy when considering Scripture over against such fictional novels. For the most part, the reader of fiction has only the story given by the author to develop and summarize the characters of the book. The reader of Scripture, in Chalmers’s opinion, also must survey a host of external sources, including ANE parallels and archaeology. One does not prepare to read *The Lord of the Rings* by grabbing books on Hobbits and Dwarves; rather, the reader simply allows the author to provide the appropriate details necessary for a correct understanding of the text. Such is the case with Scripture, when its compositional and literary aspects are considered. Much to the chagrin of Chalmers’s goal of transporting the reader back to the world of ancient Israel, the OT “is not primarily concerned with ‘social world’ questions” (p. 2). This is certainly true. But what seems to be lacking in Chalmers’s treatment of this topic is this: even if the reader could be transported

back to ancient Israel, encounter the prophets, priests, sages, and people, and have the world of the Bible literally come alive (see p. 2), the transported one would still need the text to interpret this social world—the text that provides the theological insight from the knowing narrator. In other words, as a book intended for the beginning students and non-specialists, Chalmers could have done a more effective job of showing how the conclusions about the social world of ancient Israel informs or buttresses a close reading of the text.

As an example, such intense concern with the external sources has, in the opinion of this reviewer, caused the author to miss an important element of the training and work of prophets and sages. In the case of prophets, Chalmers emphasizes the ecstatic element of their office as well as their training. In a similar way, he emphasizes the practical training of sages, particularly with the family. However, he seems to have missed an opportunity to show that both groups were highly dependent on previously written Scripture. Prophets were not only those who possessed charismata; they were also informed exegetes. Likewise, the wise were not just those who observed nature; they were purveyors of applied Scripture.

Chalmers's work may prove to be a valuable introduction to a course on the history and sociology of ancient Israel. Moreover, it may provide a fitting launching point for the study of priests, prophets, sages, and ancient Israelite people. In both of these, it would fit well in an undergraduate setting. However, the one who uses it must be cautious to supplement Chalmers's work with instruction on a proper view of sociology and archaeology in the task of reading the text. An uninformed student could possibly walk away from the textbook with a misconception of the hermeneutical task, confused about the relationship between the inspired text of the OT and non-inspired works.

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Christians in an Age of Wealth: A Biblical Theology of Stewardship. By Craig L. Blomberg. Biblical Theology for Life 3. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013, 271 pp., \$24.99.

Christians in an Age of Wealth is the third book in Zondervan's Biblical Theology for Life series edited by Jonathan Lunde. This volume, along with all the volumes in this series, begins by raising the questions that will be discussed in the book ("Queuing the Questions"), followed by a section answering those questions ("Arriving at Answers"), and finally an application section that discusses the relevance of these questions and answers for Christians today ("Reflecting on Relevance"). Each chapter also ends with a few "Relevant Questions" that help individuals reflect or aid in group discussions.

This is not Blomberg's first foray into this topic. He previously published *Neither Poverty nor Riches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999) and *Heart, Soul and Money: A Christian View of Possessions* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2000). Those works were more specifically on a biblical theology on possessions while this is on stewardship more broadly.

So how does Blomberg describe the problem today? American culture (and evangelicalism) has fallen prey to materialism, consumerism, and “affluenza.” He demonstrates this problem in the church by his analysis of the current dismal giving record among even those who call themselves “strong” or “very strong” Christians (p. 24). He also traces the problem back to church leaders and the way churches have staffed themselves and dedicated so much money to facilities (p. 27). Governments are indicted, as well as different “Christian” thoughts about how government should or should not be involved in solving the problem of global poverty.

Blomberg appropriately explains his biblical theology methodology (pp. 33–34). As expected, he shows sensitivity to issues such as word studies, genre, and the dating of biblical books. He prepares the readers for five main areas and then specifically addresses these areas.

He first discusses the goodness of wealth. He quickly flies high over all the major corpora of Scripture, providing the hermeneutical principles he is using along the way. Not overly detailed but not simplistic, his coverage of the data is adequate to prove his main points: (1) acquiring modest wealth is good and there should be plenty of opportunities to get it; and (2) we should share God’s concern for the poor and think wisely about how to demonstrate that concern in tangible ways. Regarding point 1, particularly helpful here is his discussion on the context for the OT promises and how they relate to new covenant Christians (pp. 45–46) and his comments on the prayer of Jabez (p. 47). Throughout the NT discussion on the goodness of wealth, he consistently provides helpful rebukes to prosperity gospel interpretation (e.g. pp. 58–59).

His second major topic is on how possessions can seduce people to sin. While material possessions are not inherently evil (the previous topic), the strong desire for riches can greatly tempt Christians. Temptations for riches can be seen in the Pentateuch in places such as Lot choosing the more fertile area (despite its neighbors) and the Israelites collecting manna on the Sabbath (pp. 68–69). He continues tracing this temptation through the OT and NT, providing many gems along the way, like when he says that “no other rival to God than mammon appears more often or centrally in Scripture” (p. 95).

Blomberg’s third topic is about the dilemma caused by the issues raised by the first two topics: if having some wealth is good but possessions can seduce people to sin, how can we guard against this temptation? A key aspect to answering this question is found in being a generous giver. When Christians give generously, God will bless them (including financial blessings) so they can continue to be generous givers (p. 101).

The fourth topic revolves around the areas of tithing (or, the percentage of income a Christians must give) and taxes. As Blomberg walks through the OT texts on tithing, he avoids explicitly disclosing his conclusion regarding the binding (or non-binding) nature of giving ten percent, but he consistently provides principles to the passages under discussion (e.g. pp. 126–27). His discussion on Malachi 3 (pp. 127–28) is particularly important, and he concludes that a mandated tithe (a ten percent contribution) is not taught in the NT nor required of Christians. Blomberg concludes that the paying of taxes, even to an “idolatrous, oppressive” government,

is completely supportable biblically (p. 137), with possible exceptions included (p. 144). His discussion on priorities in giving is particularly helpful and practical (p. 139).

Blomberg's fifth topic is about the importance of the topic at hand. His argument can be succinctly summarized as good stewardship is "Exhibit A" regarding the genuineness of one's faith (pp. 146, 157), and this is demonstrated by tracing its importance through the entire Bible. He concludes, "What is at stake with stewardship is one's very salvation" (p. 169).

Part 3 discusses the application of his conclusions in three chapters. Chapter 7 discusses individual stewardship (e.g. budgets, sacrificial living, to whom to give our money, etc.). Chapter 8 discusses the government and businesses as stewards. Besides the chapter dealing with tithing, Blomberg's discussions on capitalism and socialism, combined with his comments on abortion, will prove to be controversial. Blomberg deliberates on the strengths and weaknesses of each economic system. Regarding abortion, he comments that "to gratuitously kill people one has no reason to believe are Christians (as in the bombing of certain civilian populations in Muslim countries) is far worse than the loss of a life one has good reason to believe will be with Jesus for eternity" (p. 215). Those who appreciate Wayne Grudem's *Politics—According to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010) might find some challenging comments in the text and footnotes of this chapter (see especially p. 202, n. 33). In the chapter "The Church as Steward," Blomberg gives advice on church facilities, paying pastoral staff, being generous in giving to missions, and priorities for giving. This is followed by a brief conclusion.

A few quick criticisms should be mentioned. First, in responding to the prosperity gospel, Blomberg says that God never promised prosperity to every individual under the old covenant (p. 46). While he cites as evidence the fact that some clearly did not experience prosperity (possibly someone like Job), their responses of being puzzled and confused (e.g. Ps 119:153–160; Job 9:20–24; Eccl 7:15) seem to indicate they believed the promise *was* for every individual. It could have helped if he had clarified why they would react in a confused manner when they did not receive the expected prosperity. Further, national prosperity, it would seem, would lead to individual prosperity (if, of course, the wealth successfully "trickled down"). Also, while I think I grasp why the importance of stewardship is not discussed until the sixth chapter, it would seem more natural to put that section earlier in the book to try and hook readers to read the book. Finally, I was not overly comfortable with Blomberg's discussion on capitalism and socialism, but that topic is beyond my area of expertise. Many might challenge his criticisms of capitalism and those who vote only/primarily on the issue of abortion.

As a whole, then, the book accomplishes many wonderful goals. Some who have concluded that tithing (giving ten percent of income) is not required for Christians have been attacked as lowering the standard of giving. Any honest read of this volume will not come to the same conclusion. Blomberg sounds the alarm against the rising materialism and stinginess in American Christianity. Many of us can learn from the principles he unpacks from Scripture and his own life example that he presents in the book.

In the end, this is a spectacular work (with only chapter 8 leaving me uncomfortable) that I cannot recommend highly enough. The only “recent” book that compares to it is Randy Alcorn’s *Money, Possessions, and Eternity* (rev. ed.; Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2003). Blomberg writes at a very accessible level, but provides enough footnotes for more detailed research. I truly hope scholars, pastors, and church members around our country will purchase, read, and apply the principles he has carefully derived from Scripture.

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Donkeys in the Biblical World: Ceremony and Symbol. By Kenneth C. Way. History, Archaeology, and Culture of the Levant 2. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011, xvi + 272 pp., \$52.50.

Since the 2002 publication of three books (Billie Jean Collins, ed., *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East*; Peter Riede, *Im Spiegel der Tiere: Studien zum Verhältnis von Mensch und Tier im alten Israel*; and Chikako E. Watanabe, *Animal Symbolism in Mesopotamia: A Contextual Approach*), only a few studies on animals in the ANE have appeared in book form. Among them are Brent A. Strawn’s *What is Stronger Than a Lion? Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* and most recently, the first two volumes of the Eisenbrauns new HACL series, Deborah O’Daniel Cantrell’s *The Horsemen of Israel: Horses and Chariotry in Monarchic Israel (Ninth–Eighth Centuries B.C.E.)* and the current volume. The present study is a revised and expanded version of Kenneth C. Way’s doctoral dissertation (supervised by Nili S. Fox and Samuel Greengus) originally submitted to the faculty of Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion.

Way’s book consists of five chapters. In his introductory chapter, Way first describes the main purpose of the current study that is “to explicate the role of donkeys in the symbolism and ceremonies of the biblical world” based on the relevant ANE textual and archaeological materials in order to demonstrate that “donkeys held a special status in the beliefs and rituals of the ancient Near East and especially Canaan-Israel” (p. 2). Our author then provides a succinct historical survey of scholarship on donkeys primarily based on the Mari texts and various equid burials from the Bronze Age in the Near East, and introduces his three major corpora to be examined (ANE texts [chap. 2], ANE archaeological materials [chap. 3], and biblical texts [chap. 4]), which are restricted to the ceremonial and symbolic context of donkeys. Repudiating the current scholarly segregated tendency among the disciplines (particularly, between archaeological and textual disciplines), Way underscores the urgent need of “balanced integration of the sources/fields (namely, archaeology, iconography, philology, and the Bible)”; this becomes his essential methodology in treating his corpora (p. 14). At the end of chapter 1, our author selects four animals (camel, dog, lion, and serpent) which are somewhat closely associated with the donkey in the ANE sources, and briefly introduces these ani-

mals' cultic and symbolic functions in the Hebrew Bible and the ANE as a basic reference for a further comparison with the donkey in the following chapters.

Chapter 2, the lengthiest chapter (76 pages), includes extremely helpful references and thoroughly detailed textual analyses of Egyptian, Northwest Semitic (Ugaritic & Aramaic), Hittite, Akkadian, and Sumerian sources regarding the symbolic and ceremonial significance of the donkey. With his careful treatment of ANE sources, Way persuasively proposes twenty-one general characteristics in association with the donkey, along with sensitively differentiating the distinctive usage of each characteristic among different sources. For example, Way suggests that, because the donkey is associated with high socio-economic status, it generally serves as a mount for people of high standing in most ANE sources; however, in ancient Egypt, the donkey is largely considered a negative animal, as travel-mount of lowly foreigners.

In Chapter 3, Way broadly presents the archaeological materials from a considerable number (33 sites) of "deliberate deposition of donkey remains" from Egypt, Israel-Palestine, Syria, and Iraq in order to consolidate particularly the ceremonial significance of the donkey, including Aegean and Anatolian equid burials (not necessarily donkeys only, p. 104). The majority of equid burials in Egypt and Israel-Palestine come from the Middle Bronze Age, whereas the majority of burials in Syria and Iraq come from the Early Bronze Age (Table 2, p. 151). Notwithstanding the diversified nature of archaeological data, our author systematically divides the large and diverse equid burials into five general categories: (1) those associated with human graves; (2) those unrelated to human graves; (3) those situated beneath walls; (4) those situated in a fill covering a temple complex; and (5) those situated in a special tomb beside a temple. This categorization is very valuable in comprehending the ceremonial functions of the donkey in its close relation to humans and the temple.

Chapter 4 exegetically discusses the donkey passages in the Hebrew Bible. Way first attempts to delineate the semantic domain of four terminologies (*hāmôr*, *'ātôn*, *'ayir*, and *pered*) referring to the donkey and its hybrid, and restates ten characteristics of the donkey (of the twenty-one in the summary section of Chapter 2) that appear in biblical literature. The donkey passages in the Bible include the Shechem traditions (Gen 33:18–34:31; Josh 24:32; Judg 8:33–9:57), the redemption of the firstborn male donkey with the neck-breaking ritual (Exod 13:13, 34:20), the story of Balaam's jenny (Num 22:22–35), the story of the man of God from Judah (1 Kings 13), and finally a short note about donkey burial (Jer 22:19). From the exegetical, literary, and contextual perspectives, Way nicely analyzes these passages in comparison with the ANE culture. In particular, the comparative observations between Numbers 22 and 1 Kings 13 are quite nicely done.

The final chapter basically concludes the work synthetically by presenting the symbolic and ceremonial significances of donkeys. Way concludes, "It is demonstrated in the preceding pages that there is much more to the donkey than these mundane matters. This study fills a void in scholarship by focusing on the donkey's unique status in the socio-religious thoughts and practices that are expressed in ancient texts, material culture, and the Bible" (p. 203).

Way's current volume is comprehensive in providing a balanced and integrated picture regarding the symbolic and ceremonial roles of donkeys and careful in dealing with the variegated ANE texts as well as the biblical texts. Several critical comments, nevertheless, are necessarily in order. First, in his discussion of the donkey burial at the sacred complex in Area K at Tel Haror (pp. 129–33, 158), Way proposes that the two intact donkeys probably reflect the treaty ceremony found in the Mari texts. His interpretation is viable; however, how are slaughtered (with the Akkadian verbs, *ḥayarum*, *qatālum*, *dākum*, and *maḥāšum* in the Mari texts) or cut-in-half donkeys or puppies in treaty ceremonies considered intact? Way implicitly suggests that an intact donkey does not have any missing bone pieces and is without cut marks from butchery. But do these Akkadian verbs referring to “to slaughter” exclude any meaning of “cutting from butchery?” These semantic and conceptual issues may need to be further discussed along with his interpretation.

Second, in the discussion of the semantic domain of the terminologies referring to the donkey, following M. Dahood's translation of פרא אדם (“an onager of the steppe”) in Job 11:12 (ואיש נבוב ילבב ועיר פרא אדם יולד:), Way proposes that this passage contrasts the domestic ‘*ayir* and the wild *pere*’, emphasizing the impossibility that a wild onager is born a domestic jackass (p. 167). This interpretation, however, is unlikely at least to the Masoretes because the word *pere*’ takes a disjunctive accent, *rebia mugrash* (for the detailed usage of this accent, see James Price, *The Syntax of Masoretic Accents in the Hebrew Bible* [Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1990] 198–212).

Third, one might wish the transliterations of the ANE texts would be more consistent. In particular, logograms are capitalized in some texts, but not in others (e.g. ANŠE on p. 74 vs. anše on p. 86; kù-babbar [neither kù.babbar nor KÙ.BABBAR] on p. 80, but ZAG.DU on p. 89).

In spite of a few minor drawbacks, Way should be praised for his significant contribution to the field of religion in the Hebrew Bible and the ANE. This volume is a carefully written and comprehensively researched study. It is highly recommended for both scholars as well as anyone who is interested in the symbolic and ceremonial significance of the donkey in the ANE world.

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David Remembered: Kingship and National Identity in Ancient Israel. By Joseph Blenkinsopp. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013, 231 pp., \$26.00 paper.

Those who yearn for satisfying integration of biblical exegesis, history, and theology will find fulfillment in this stylistically pleasing work. Joseph Blenkinsopp presents an informative study of the themes of Davidic monarchy and messianism from the late pre-exilic period through the Second Temple period and on the way in which the Jewish communities of those 600 years remembered and reshaped the Davidic tradition.

It will first be helpful to track Blenkinsopp's thesis from the beginning to the end. He begins with the forlorn days of the apparent end of the Davidic dynasty

when, with Josiah's untimely death, it seemed to the community that all was lost. However, even under imperialism sparks of life began to flicker and to signal renewed possibility that the House of David could yet survive, albeit in most indirect ways.

For example, Gedaliah, the governor appointed by the Babylonian authorities, was a grandson of Shaphan, the high priest in the golden days of Josiah. Even with Gedaliah's assassination, the flame continued and became brighter with Second Isaiah's reference to Cyrus as the "anointed one," though Cyrus as such could not be in mind in a literal sense since he lacked proper Davidic lineage. Following the exile, there was no longer need to reinterpret Cyrus as another David because, as Haggai and Zechariah noted, Zerubbabel assumed the governorship and, as a direct descendant of David through the exiled king Jehoiachin, filled the bill perfectly. To this rising hope were added the great eschatological texts of the prophets, notably Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Zephaniah, and Second Zechariah.

Even the calamitous end of the short-lived semi-independence of the Jewish state could not snuff out messianic hope. The dynastic theme persisted throughout the Second Temple period with the rich apocalyptic literature of Maccabean and Hasmonean rule, including texts from the apocryphal and pseudepigraphic collections as well as from Qumran. Resistance to Roman rule, whether under the Maccabees or the much later Bar Kokhba rebellion, was based not solely on the desire for national, political independence but a religious impulse to clear the way for a Davidic messianic kingdom to emerge in its place. Thus, Davidic messianism was a hope tightly held to the very end.

With no intention of undercutting the impressive quality of the work under review, the following few observations are nonetheless in order. First, the assertion that "once an iconic personality or event from the past enters the realm of legend and myth...lack of historical credibility becomes irrelevant" (p. 9) seems to contradict Blenkinsopp's otherwise positive view of the historicity of the David narratives in general. In any case, it is an unnecessary concession to prevailing modes of skepticism regarding the historicity of the era of the United Monarchy, which in fact is becoming more and more clarified and put on solid historical grounding.

Second, the author's assumption of "Trito-Isaiah" as a discrete text is the basis for another assumption, namely, that the narratives of David-Solomon in Dtr must therefore be post-exilic (p. 124). This clearly is a case of begging the question in which the alleged lateness of one text is the basis for assuming the lateness of another. This logical fallacy is out of keeping with good historiography. Individual texts should be judged on the basis of their own self-attestations and inner coherence.

Third, the proposal that the young woman of Isa 7:14 was the mother of Hezekiah who, therefore, was the child-sign in view is impossible given a correct understanding of the chronology at this point (p. 134, n. 40). Hezekiah was born c. 740 BC, eight years before the prediction was made, and therefore could not be the child promised after the prediction by Isaiah (for a full treatment, see my *Kingdom of Priests: A History of OT Israel* [2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008] 415–18).

These minor caveats can hardly take away from the excellence of Blenkinsopp's work in general. One could wish for more of this kind of incisive and instructive scholarship.

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Elisha's Profile in the Book of Kings: The Double Agent. By Keith Bodner. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, 280 pp., \$99.00.

In *Elisha's Profile in the Book of Kings: The Double Agent* (hereafter *Elisha's Profile*) Keith Bodner investigates the question, "To what extent is Elisha characterized as a double agent compared with his mentor Elijah after asking for a double portion of his spirit?" (p. 10). Building off Nachman Levine's suggestions in the article "Twice as Much of Your Spirit" (JSOT 85 [1999] 25–46), Bodner looks beyond the simplicity of Elisha merely doubling Elijah's miracles, to explore how Elisha's ministry paralleled the themes, elements, and languages of Elijah's ministry. He asserts, "*Elisha's Profile in the Book of Kings: The Double Agent* uses the tools of literary criticism to read the Elisha narrative as an integral component of the Deuteronomistic History compiled in the aftermath of the Babylonian invasion and destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE" (back cover). Bodner concludes that "the textual clues inexorably lead to the verdict that Elisha does receive the parting gift that he requests" (p. 162).

The book consists of a lengthy prologue, six chapters, a postscript, a significant bibliography, and an index. The prologue is especially helpful in that Bodner not only reveals the methods and intent of the book, but also discloses the works that compelled him to write the book. That peek behind the veil is a pleasing feature that brings the reader near to the heart and soul of the book. In Chapter 1, Bodner discusses the world of Elijah so as to establish the standard by which one may compare Elisha's ministry and miracles. Chapter 2 examines the transition between Elijah and Elisha, considering the request for a double portion and how it "has been understood in the reception history of the passage" (p. 16). Chapter 3 addresses the episodes of the Moab trip and the Shunamite woman. Bodner makes suggestions as to how these contribute to the larger narrative (p. 17). Bodner traces the story of the Naaman and the peripheral stories in Chapter 4. The intent is to "assay their function in the structural design of this stretch of text" (p. 17). Chapter 5 wrestles with the contrast of Elisha's knowledge of secret information given to him by God and his confession that "the Lord has concealed from me and has not told me" (2 Kgs 4:27; p. 18). Chapter 6 visits some recurring characters in the Elisha narrative. Those roles are measured as to their contribution to the overall narrative. Then, the final section of the book is the "Postscript." Following a brief explanation of the pericope concerning Elisha's bones bringing a man to life (2 Kgs 13:20–21), Bodner summarizes his work by revisiting four main areas discussed within the book, namely the literary techniques, the supporting characters, the Elisha story within the house of Omri narrative, and the characterization of Elisha based on the completed narrative.

One of the strengths of *Elisha's Profile* is the ease with which Bodner recasts the Elisha story against the larger narrative. Bodner's writing style permitted an easy and uncomplicated reading of the book. Yet, I found that style to be a slight nuisance as well. Sometimes it was difficult to determine the point of Bodner's chapter discussions; too often it seemed he was simply retelling the biblical story. Admittedly, the issue may be a matter of stylistic preference or perhaps my personal lack of understanding the nuances of literary criticism. But more intermittent signposts would have been helpful and preferable.

Another strength of *Elisha's Profile* is how Bodner established the role and function of the minor characters and pericopes within the Elisha narrative. Too often functionaries like these are overlooked while regarding the larger narrative. But Bodner was successful in developing reasonable explanations as to how those characters and stories functioned in the larger Elisha narrative, and thus, in the larger Deuteronomistic narrative.

Elisha's Profile is a worthwhile read and a commendable contribution to the study of the Elisha material. It is my opinion that those teaching the historical books and prophets would find this work a helpful source of reference.

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Psalms 1–2: Gateway to the Psalter. By Robert L. Cole. Hebrew Bible Monographs 37. Sheffield: Phoenix, 2013, ix + 182 pp., \$80.00.

Robert Cole, formerly professor of OT at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, has written previously on the contours of the Psalter. The most recent addition to his bibliography, *Psalms 1–2: Gateway to the Psalter* (hereafter *Gateway*), is “the fruit of the better part of two decades of reading, teaching and meditating” on Psalms 1–2 (p. vii). *Gateway* is a full-scale assault on form-critical readings of the Psalter. Cole posits that the Psalter is not a cacophonous fusion of random poems forced to exist side by side in Israel's hymnbook. Instead, the final editor of the Psalter gave it an intentional shape. In Cole's words, the Psalter is “not an evolved collection slowly taking shape by accretion, but rather a discrete and integrated whole, a book in every sense of the word” (p. vii). As such, Cole argues that to read the Psalter well scholars must attend to the theological and structural prominence of Psalms 1–2.

Cole divides his book into four chapters—an introductory chapter on the history of research followed by three chapters that treat Psalms 1, 2, and 3 respectively. Chapter 1 surveys the history of interpretation with respect to the Psalter's canonical shape. However, this chapter is far more than a perfunctory introduction. Cole unleashes his considerable knowledge of the secondary literature on the Psalms to demonstrate why investigations into an integrated view of the Psalter have been neglected and still, to some degree, remain unfashionable. The chapter primarily focuses on how interpreters have treated the first two psalms, their relationship to the rest of the Psalter, and the hermeneutical presuppositions that have kept inter-

preters from seeing any significance in the Psalter's structure. Cole particularly focuses on the negative influence of Hermann Gunkel in Psalms scholarship. In many ways, Cole's first chapter is the story of the academic guild's inability to come out of the long shadow cast by Gunkel's form-critical method. Once the ground is cleared of form-critical presuppositions, Cole begins to build his argument.

Chapters 2 and 3 analyze the structure of the first three psalms, followed by a verse-by-verse exegesis of each text. Even a partial account of Cole's observations—which include detailed explanations of assonance, alliteration, linguistic similarities, juxtaposition of literary devices, inclusions, intratextuality, etc.—would exceed the limit of this review. Suffice it to say that Cole's exegesis includes everything from dissecting the microscopic details of a text to “big-picture” telescopic observations. Whatever scholars may conclude about Cole's argument, all readers will find him remarkably thorough.

One of the chief concerns of Cole's exegetical commentary is to underscore the fact that Psalm 1 is ultimately about “the man” (הַאִישׁ) —not the “law” (תּוֹרָה). Cole posits that previous categorizations of Psalm 1 as a “wisdom” or “torah” psalm ignores the best option of the central subject of the psalm, the man. Challenging the “long held view of Psalm 1 as a universal prescriptive program for righteous living” (p. 54), Cole posits that the psalmist is describing an actual eschatological figure. “The Man” is a priest-king (p. 67) who is the fulfilment of Israel's Scriptures (Deuteronomy 17; Joshua 1).

Most of chapter 3 provides exegetical commentary on each verse of Psalm 2—primarily focusing on its relationship to Psalm 1 and to the rest of the Psalter in general. The primary point of Cole's commentary is to demonstrate that the blessed man of Psalm 1 is identified with the Lord's anointed in Psalm 2. Likewise, the wicked in Psalm 1 are further described in Psalm 2 as those who set themselves up against Yahweh and his king.

Cole also demonstrates how these introductory psalms form the introduction to the entire Psalter. For example, Cole explores how the words and themes of the first two psalms are “reiterated at important junctures in the book”—particularly Psalm 40, 72, 89, and 146–150 (p. 82). On the basis of many verbal and thematic similarities Cole concludes, “The major seams of the Psalter (Pss 72, 89, 146–149), display overt verbal connectors to its introduction” (p. 86).

Chapter 4 focuses on Psalm 3. Unlike the previous two chapters, Cole does not provide a verse-by-verse analysis of this psalm. Instead, he more narrowly focuses on why Psalm 3 is placed after Psalm 1 and 2 and in what ways it is connected with and develops the themes of the previous two psalms. In Cole's words, Psalm 3 evidences a “literary *Gestalt* that form criticism lacks the power to explain” (p. 141).

Whereas the suffering king of Psalm 3 appears radically disconnected from the untouchable triumphant messiah of Psalm 2, Cole demonstrates that once again, many verbal, syntactical, thematic, and phonological parallels unite Psalms 2 and 3 in a way that demands they be treated as mutually interpretive of one another. Amidst the numerous verbal and phonological parallels these psalms also contain essentially the same plot. Both Psalms begin with astonishment, a murderous plot

against the king, and a benediction on the people of God. On the basis of these evidences, Cole concludes, “Clearly the book’s redactor considered David’s words in Psalm 3 as prophetic of the coming eschatological king portrayed in Psalms 1–2” (p. 147).

In summary, the juxtaposition of Psalm 2 and 3 is more than coincidental. If Psalms 1–2 are the gateway to the Psalter, then the transition between Psalms 2 and 3 and the intertextual playfulness between them provide readers with a hermeneutical key for reading the psalms.

Psalms 3 and 4 are the first of a series of individual prayers that dominate Books I and II and reveal that for the Psalter’s redactor they represent the petitions of the persecuted eschatological messianic king portrayed in the introduction. In other words, the transition between Psalms 1–2 and Psalm 3 points the way to the reading strategy behind the present canonical shape of the Psalter (p. 152).

Gateway is a fresh and exciting new work on the Psalter and deserving of a great deal of praise. Cole’s exegetical work is fresh, articulate, and robust. His observations of the deficiencies of form-criticism are incisive and deserve careful consideration. His commitment to the unity of the Psalter is refreshing. Overall, there is very little deserving criticism in Cole’s work.

That said, I do have some minor quibbles. First, Cole, in his seemingly exhaustive exegesis of Psalm 2 and its intratextual connections within the Psalter, did not treat Psalm 82:8, which has some suggestive parallels with 2:8. Second, I was disappointed that Cole did not more extensively develop the place of Psalm 1 in the canon of the Hebrew Bible. He treats the matter briefly on several occasions, though without any significant development. For example, he notes, “It is probably not coincidental that reference to torah occurs at major junctures of the Hebrew canon following the Pentateuch: Joshua 1 at the head of the Prophets, Isaiah 1 opening the Latter Prophets, and Psalm 1 opening the Writings” (p. 60n). These are insightful observations and I was disappointed Cole did not develop them more.

Obviously these are small quibbles. These criticisms should not detract from Cole’s remarkable achievement. *Gateway* is an outstanding piece of work that demonstrates careful thinking and a high caliber of scholarship. This work is brimming with exegetical and theological insights and well worth reading and re-reading.

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When God Spoke Greek: The Septuagint and the Making of the Christian Bible. By Timothy Michael Law. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, ix + 216 pp., \$24.95 paper.

The goal of this book is to demonstrate that understanding the Septuagint is a prerequisite to understanding the NT and early Christianity in general (p. 4). However, the author’s agenda is broader than that as he bemoans how the church has depended on the Hebrew Bible at the expense of the Septuagint, which had been considered authoritative by the early church, and he wishes, among other things, to see theologians rehabilitate “the Septuagint to the place it occupied at the founda-

tion of the church” (p. 171). He thus embarks on a historical survey of the Bible from its composition to its reception in the times of Jerome and Augustine.

Chapter 2 offers a brief history of Israel from the Babylonian exile in the 6th century BCE and moves quickly to the Second Temple period, “perhaps the most decisive period in Jewish history” (p. 10), where Law discusses some of the challenges to Jewish identity at the time.

Chapter 3 deals mainly with the discoveries of the Judean desert. In this chapter, the author discusses how the variety of textual forms in the discovered manuscripts reveals that the biblical books existed in a state of flux. Although they confirmed that the Hebrew Bible we now possess is based on a very ancient text, it is obvious that it was not the only one available. Law quotes Tov as stating that “it should not be postulated that the Masoretic Text better or more frequently reflects the original text of the biblical books than any other text” (p. 23). Law discusses different text “types” such as the Samaritan, the Septuagint, and the Masoretic and notes how these witnesses “vindicated earlier speculations that the Septuagint was translated from alternative Hebrew texts” (p. 24). He then proceeds to discuss major differences between various text “types” of biblical books such as Exodus, Samuel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.

Chapter 4 introduces us to the *Letter of Aristeas*, which narrates how the Septuagint came about. Law suggests that one of the author’s main goals was “to convince his reader that the Greek translation was the very word of God for Alexandrian Jews” (p. 39). Apart from the claims of the *Letter of Aristeas*, Law examines the “Interlinear Paradigm” theory for the origins of the Septuagint (i.e. it was not produced to be an autonomous document but to be used with constant reference to the Hebrew), but he does not find it entirely convincing.

In chapter 5, Law looks at those books translated from Hebrew texts (leaving Greek compositions for another chapter), beginning with the Pentateuch. He proposes that one should not be distracted by the question “Which one represents the most original text?” but should recognize that “the Septuagint often transmits an alternative tradition that is neither earlier nor later but one that could have coexisted with the sources that made up the Hebrew Bible” (p. 44). Law provides some interesting examples where the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew text in order to resolve theological problems, such as preserving God’s Sabbath rest in Gen 2:2. Other Septuagint differences are not so much based on the translators’ exegesis but indicate a certain literary stage in the development of the biblical book (e.g. Num 27:15–23). The most significant examples of this type of difference are found in the books of Samuel and Kings (e.g. the David and Goliath story exists in an expanded version in the Hebrew Bible). In the discussion of prophetic books, Isaiah takes the lead as being a very creative and artistic translation, almost as distinct as a fresh composition. Jeremiah is a book that was probably translated from a much shorter Hebrew base text than the one found in our Hebrew Bible and, similarly, Ezekiel in the Septuagint points to a different Hebrew base. Although the dates of the translations of the biblical books are unknown, Law places most of the “Five Festal Scrolls” at the end of the translation process (as late as the second century CE) on the basis of their literal translation method (pp. 56–57).

In chapter 6, Law discusses the “Apocrypha” and “pseudepigrapha,” while in chapter 7 he analyzes the revisional activity that is evident in various manuscripts of the Judean desert dating from c. 200 BCE to c. 200 CE. Although this revisional activity (known as *kaige*) was widespread and was carried out in a systematic fashion over several books, Law cautions against concluding that the revisions demonstrate a tendency to minimize the diversity of biblical texts and lead to the standardization of one text form (i.e. the predecessor of our Hebrew Bible). He says that “there may not have been a widespread desire to align with the sources of the Hebrew Bible any more than to any other text” (p. 76). The discussion continues with a short introduction to the revisions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. The revisional activity of the text leads to the topic of canon for which Law offers a brief historical introduction and reflection on the effects of canonization.

Chapter 8 is the one most interesting to NT scholars, where Law shows how the Septuagint (including Apocrypha and pseudepigrapha) has *influenced* NT theology while chapter 9 shows how it is more explicitly *used* by NT writers. Chapter 10 develops the discussion on the Christian canon, and chapter 11 shows how the Septuagint was used in the development of early Christian worship and doctrine by the church’s exegetes. Figures who played a significant role in the production, modification, and dissemination of the biblical text, such as Eusebius, Constantine, and Origen are discussed in chapter 12, and the book culminates in chapter 13 with the opposing forces of Jerome’s and Augustine’s attitudes towards the Septuagint. A postscript follows where Law presents contemporary views on the role of the Septuagint and invites us to make amends for the unjustifiable neglect of the Scriptures used by the NT writers and church fathers (p. 171).

While one might think that this is yet another book on the Septuagint, it is distinguished from others in various ways. It is able to bring the contributions of the latest scholarship on the Septuagint into one book, to popularize studies that are very complex and technical (not to mention economically inaccessible to the wider public), and to offer us a broad perspective on where the discussion is at the moment. This is done in a thorough way, so that the book could be used as a reference work on what the textual state of each biblical book is, what the important theological divergences are, and what alternative ways there are to view some of the disagreements among witnesses.

The book’s weaknesses have mainly to do with unclear definitions and assumptions. As is common in discussions about ancient Greek translations of the Hebrew Scriptures, the anachronistic title “Septuagint” is used, which gives the impression to the reader that the NT writers had access to such a thing called “the Septuagint.” The term is as vague as saying “the English Bible.” When one uses an English Bible, it is possible that they are using a Hebrew or a Greek *form* of the text. The fact that their Bible is in English is irrelevant to whether they are using one text form or another. Regarding ancient Greek translations, an ancient author may be using the Scriptures in the Greek language but that is no indication as to whether they are using an old Septuagint form or an old Masoretic form. At times, Law appears to mix the *language* with the *form*. The confusion is obvious in Law’s discussion of Matthew’s usage of the Hebrew Scriptures. On p. 99, Law speaks of the

knowledge of *language* (either Greek or Hebrew) by Jesus and Matthew, but this is irrelevant to the question about which text form one is using (p. 100). In effect, using a revised version of the Septuagint can be equivalent to using the Hebrew text form. Even a non-Hebrew speaker, in this sense, may be using the *Hebrew!* The confusion is created when both the Septuagint and revisions of the Septuagint toward the Hebrew are called “the Greek” or “the Septuagint.” The text form has changed, but because it maintains the same language, it is erroneously categorized and discussed as “Septuagint.” Law states regarding the General Epistles and Revelation: “All of these show evidences of their author’s use of the Septuagint and its revisions instead of the Hebrew” (p. 111). Here he juxtaposes the Greek revisions to the Hebrew text, obviously referring to the language instead of the text form (cf. discussion on Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion on p. 160). Also, the argument that Paul prefers the Greek because he spoke and attended Greek liturgy (p. 105) does not signify anything, especially at a time of a plethora of Greek versions circulating (possibly even others unmentioned by Law, such as quinta, sexta, septima, etc.)

Although Law presents the search for the “original” as a *distinctively* modern theological anxiety (p. 168), I am not sure one can be so certain. There are many indications of anxiety with respect to the accuracy of one’s text, and this is obvious from the very beginnings of the Greek translation. The *Letter of Aristeas* illustrates the great lengths to which the author goes in order to prove that the most accurate manuscripts were used (p. 37, cf. *Let. Aris.* 30–31, 176–77). The *existence* of fluidity or diversity is not always an indication of *comfort* with that diversity, and we may often read history with a postmodern pluralistic lens. Regardless of which text people were revising towards, the truth is that they felt the need to revise, and that shows some kind of discomfort, insecurity, or dissatisfaction with the text they already had in their hands.

Nevertheless, Law’s call to theologians and biblical scholars is a valid one. No serious student of the Bible can afford to ignore the ancient Greek text or the books of the Second Temple period, even if these are not included in one’s canon. Indeed, one’s understanding of the times, culture, and thought of the NT writers would be seriously lacking without them.

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Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures. Vol. 1. Edited by Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila, and Alexander Panayotov. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013, xl + 808 pp., \$90.00.

Since anthologies of so-called “Old Testament pseudepigrapha” were first compiled in Johann Albert Fabricius’s *Codex Pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti* (1713), the study of these documents has found an increasingly familiar place within biblical scholarship. For English speakers the seminal work is that of R. H. Charles, whose *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (2 vols.; Oxford:

Clarendon, 1913) contains seventeen texts. More familiar are the volumes edited H. F. D. Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984) and James H. Charlesworth (*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* [2 vols.; Garden City: Doubleday, 1983, 1985]). The former contains thirty-five documents, the latter boasts sixty-five texts, and the present volume (*MOTP*) contains still *more* (thirty-nine entries).

The volume begins with an extended forward by Charlesworth (pp. xi–xvi), where his praise for the volume is framed by the recognition of the need for an expansion of his own (edited) collection. As a pioneer in the field, Charlesworth is able to chronicle the evolution of scholarly inquiry in the discipline, while highlighting its limitations. This forward, essential reading for users of the book, provides a succinct account of the state of affairs in pseudepigrapha scholarship reflected in the breadth of texts included in the *MOTP* collection.

In their introduction (pp. xvii–xxxviii), Davila and Bauckham address the essential issues of critical scholarship, including terminology such as “Old Testament” and “pseudepigrapha,” in an informed yet accessible manner. Though keenly aware of the anachronisms and pitfalls of such nomenclature, they explain the meanings of these conventions as a means of introducing readers to the field of study. Their choice to designate the collection noncanonical “Scriptures” is a curious one that is unlikely to be an appropriate description of the reception of most of these texts. The second issue is the overlapping and complex matter of the composition and transmission of OT pseudepigrapha. This subject pertains to the difficulty of discerning whether an ancient text is Jewish or Christian in its origin—since nearly all pseudepigrapha are preserved almost exclusively in Christian transmission—and the complexities of identifying such parameters. This subject, dealt with extensively by both Bauckham and Davila elsewhere, is followed by a history of the field of pseudepigrapha studies. As is done elsewhere, this survey is largely an accounting of the history of the publication of individual texts and collections of texts.

Inevitably, the difficulties with such collections pertain to the parameters set by the editors. “Old Testament pseudepigrapha” is notoriously a category of omission: they are (generally) *not* among the OT Apocrypha, not in the Hebrew Bible, not in the NT, not (primarily) among the Dead Sea Scrolls, etc. Yet this collection is deliberately broad. Whereas Charlesworth looks largely to early Judaism and includes pagan writings, and Sparks includes Jewish and Christian writings without pagan texts, *MOTP* includes all three. Their interest is not in providing an anthology for background to the NT, but for appreciating ancient texts in their own right. In this sense, they are generally much more flexible and inclusive with five general principles in play: (1) date of composition before the rise of Islam in the early seventh century CE; (2) Jewish, Christian, or pagan origin; (3) generally not included in other substantial collections (e.g. OT Apocrypha, Nag Hammadi library, etc.); (4) not included in Sparks or Charlesworth unless a substantially new treatment was deemed necessary; (5) and later texts (after seventh century CE) that exhibit some connection with earlier material. In terms of their organization of the documents, the editors have followed the schema of Fabricius and Sparks whereby texts are arranged based on the name of the OT figure with whom it is associated in the order in which they appear in the Bible.

With these parameters, the editors include many texts not included in any prior collection (save, in some instances, that of Fabricius). They include complete documents to fragments embedded in other texts by later writers. Some works are generally known to scholars but not to a wider readership, such as *Aramaic Levi*, the *Book of Giants*, the *Book of the Mysteries*, the *Cave of Treasures*, and the *Eighth Book of Moses*. Some works, such as the Greek *Apocryphon of Jacob and Joseph*, the *Tiburine Sibyl*, the Arabic *Surid Legend*, and the Syriac *History of Joseph* are hardly known even among specialists. A few came to light subsequent to the Charlesworth volumes, such as the Aramaic *Song of the Lamb*, the Hebrew *Revelation of Gabriel*, a number of texts and fragments from the Cairo Geniza, and some Coptic fragments of *2 Enoch*.

A few texts included here date prior to 135 CE, such as *Aramaic Levi*, the Hebrew fragments of the *Testament of Naphtali*, the *Book of Giants*, and the fragments of the *Apocryphon of Ezekiel*. Other texts are later but likely originate within the Second Temple period, including the *Songs of David*, the *Nine and a Half Tribes*, the *Coptic Jeremiah Apocryphon*, the *Horarium of Adam*, the pseudo-Philonian *Sermons on Jonah, Samson and God*, and the fragments of the *Greek Apocalypse of Elijah* and of the *Testament of Moses*. Other texts are likewise late and, though they do not originate within the Second Temple period, contain traditions that do. These include works like the *Book of Noah*, the *Aramaic Song of the Lamb*, and the *Hebrew Visions of Heaven and Hell*. Such diversity illustrates that the priority of textual affinities with the NT or even Second Temple Judaism has not been a criterion for including texts in the *MOTP* collection (p. xxxi). This will continue into a second volume, which will include various texts affiliated with Adam, Enoch, Baruch, Moses, Daniel, and the Maccabean tradition, to name but a few.

All texts are presented in a manner similar to that of the Charlesworth volumes. A brief introduction explains to readers what the document is about. This is followed by a survey of editions and manuscripts of the document, its genre, structure, date, provenance, literary context, and a bibliography. The text itself is presented with bolded headings that outline the context, with cross references in the margins. Commentary is largely absent, and the sparse footnotes are typically reserved for matters of text and translation. The volume concludes with an index of modern authors and an index of Scripture and other ancient texts. The latter is particularly welcome, since a text index for the Charlesworth volumes was not published until nearly twenty years afterward.

This is a monumental work, with promise of more to come. In his forward James H. Charlesworth, lauds it as “high on the list of the most important publications in biblical studies over the past twenty-five years” (p. xi). Like the Charlesworth and Sparks volumes before it, *MOTP* must be used with critical awareness of what it is and what it is not. It is *not* in any sense a “canon” of Jewish texts from the Second Temple period. This is a common misconception of the *OTP* and must be borne in mind here as well. *MOTP* represents, in a sense, a coming of age of the discipline of the study of pseudepigrapha in its own right. This field is not set within the parameters of canonical Scriptures, but within the breadth of texts that evolve from them or are inspired by them. This first of two volumes helps to open up for a wider readership the vastness of the field, which includes not simply the

familiarity of texts preserved in Syriac, Greek, Latin, Coptic, Ethiopic, and so forth, but Old Irish, Manichean Iranian, and Turkic. The aim of the editors in making these documents available with English translation and authoritative yet accessible introductions is “to promote more scholarly study of them and to bring them to the attention of the vast lay audience who appreciate such treasures” (p. xxxviii). In this respect, one cannot help but place this volume alongside that of Charlesworth and others to enrich our understanding of these texts and the communities that preserved them.

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Love in the Gospel of John: An Exegetical, Theological, and Literary Study. By Francis J. Moloney. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013, xvi + 249 pp., \$34.99.

Well known for his writings, especially on John and on Mark, Francis J. Moloney is a Senior Professorial Fellow of Australian Catholic University at its Melbourne campus. Here he brings to us a mature study of the love theme in the Gospel of John.

Several scholars have studied this theme in John against the background of the treatment of love elsewhere in the NT, especially in the Synoptic Gospels. In the Synoptics, Jesus links together the greatest commandment (Deuteronomy 6) and the second greatest commandment (Leviticus 19) in order to teach that all the prophets and the law are suspended from these two. He also insists that his followers are to love their enemies. Yet despite his great emphasis on love, John neither links together Deuteronomy 6 and Leviticus 19, nor does he say anything about the importance of loving one's enemies. All of the emphasis lies on God's love or on the mandate that believers love one another: indeed, that is how the world will know they follow Christ. So for these scholars (e.g. Ernst Käsemann, Wayne Meeks), this shift in emphasis shows that the Johannine community has turned inward and become sectarian. Indeed, some have argued that John's love language betrays antisocial tendencies.

A second approach to interpreting John's treatment of the theme of love surfaces in the work of scholars who are much interested in delineating the history of the Johannine community. Almost inevitably, this involves the delineation of sources, followed by the inferred stages in the life of the community associated with each source. Fifty or sixty years ago the dominant voice developing and defending this sort of approach was that of Rudolf Bultmann; thirty years ago it was that of Raymond Brown. Probably the best known voice in this tradition of scholarship today is that of Urban C. von Wahlde. He argues that all the material in John's Gospel that describes God's love or Jesus' love or mandates that Jesus' followers love both him and one another comes from the third and final stage in the redactional development of the Fourth Gospel. Before that stage is reached, the Johannine Gospel materials have been influenced by John's letters, all of which were written, von Wahlde argues, before the last stage of the composition of the

Gospel of John as we know it. In short: analyzing the love theme in John's Gospel becomes, for these scholars, an element in their commitment to use source and redaction criticism to delineate the history of the Johannine community.

Moloney says he respects and has learned from these two scholarly approaches to the theme of love in John, but he prefers to adopt a third approach: he wants to examine the love theme in the text as we have it. In other words, his study focuses on the biblical theology of the finished Fourth Gospel, worked out on its own terms, without constant comparisons and contrasts with the treatment of the love theme elsewhere in the NT and without constant attempts to delineate nicely-isolated sources and stages of composition.

At this point he makes the move that defines the rest of his work. He wants to "reach beyond an analysis of the *words* and passages that deal explicitly with the theme of love in an attempt to delve more deeply into the role of that theme in the sequence of *events* that determine the narrative dynamic of the whole story" (p. 10, emphasis original). The theme of love emerges centrally in the mission of Jesus: God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that the world might be saved (John 3:16–17). In other words, "the mission of Jesus is to make known a God who loves" (p. 10)—and this is disclosed primarily in the action of the narrative, not solely in utterances about love. So most of the book is devoted to unpacking the plotline of John's Gospel with an eye peeled to discern how God's love is disclosed in this action and how Christ's followers must love in the wake of this action. In other words, Moloney focuses on what he calls "the literary and theological fabric of John 1:1–21:25" (p. 11).

Chapter 2 argues, from Moloney's survey of the plot, that the mission of Jesus is to make God known, as a function of God's love. Chapter 3 focuses on such themes as the "hour," the "lifting up" of the Son of Man, and the "gathering" of God's scattered people, as the narrative points forward to the cross. These elements in the plotline establish the cross as a place where "Jesus reveals God's glory and is himself glorified (see 11:4; 12:28; 13:31–32)" (p. 212). Chapter 4 expounds related love texts in the footwashing, Farewell Discourse, and so-called high-priestly prayer of Jesus (i.e. John 13:1–38; 15:12–17; 17:1–26). Chapter 5 works through John's passion narrative (John 18 and 19), chapter 6 the resurrection accounts (John 20 and 21).

The final substantive chapter takes two steps. First, it surveys the Johannine epistles, teasing out which love themes parallel those of the Fourth Gospel and which are rather different, generated in part by the experience of believers who feel under siege, especially from those who have abandoned the camp. Second, at this juncture Moloney helpfully circles around and raises the question first mooted at the beginning of this book: Does the narrow focus of love in John betray the fact that this community has turned inward and forged a path toward sectarianism? After all, there is a shift from loving God, one's neighbor, and even one's enemies to "a passionate command...and prayer...that the disciples love one another" (p. 203).

"Jesus tells them that their love for one another must match the love that he has shown for them in the self-giving perfection of his task on the cross (13:34;

15:12). Jesus prays that they be one as the Father and the Son are one (17:21), united by the love of the Father for the Son (17:23), finally swept into the love that has existed from all time between the Father and the Son (17:26). This appears to restrict the traditional circle of love, and a number of scholars have claimed that the Johannine love commands indicate Johannine sectarianism” (p. 203).

Moloney, however, will have none of it. Following the works of Teresa Okure and Enno Edzard Popkes, he argues for the missionary nature of the Fourth Gospel. Jesus’ disciples are to love the outsiders, in a missionary way, as the Father loves the world and sends his Son to save us. This theology is similarly articulated in 1 John (see esp. 4:9–10). After all, even the disciples’ love for one another has this end in view: that the world may see that these believers are Jesus’ disciples (13:34–35). Finally, in a four-page epilogue Moloney reflects a little on how his understanding of the Johannine theology of love might usefully be worked out today.

As in all his work, Moloney writes clearly and marshals his case winsomely. This book provides many stimulating insights into Johannine theology. One could argue over some of its details, but its weakest point is its treatment of the cross. Moloney is surely right to say that the cross is the high point of God’s self-disclosure in Christ Jesus as the loving God: that is an essential part of John’s thought. Unfortunately, he does not work out *why* or *in what way* the cross displays divine love. Indeed, at one point Moloney comments that in this book he does not want to address that question. Without addressing that question, however, it remains unclear why we should imagine that Christ’s death does not rather display political innocence, or lack of realism, or theological naiveté, or political posturing, or even insanity. At this juncture Moloney’s work is reminiscent of J. Terence Forestell’s published doctoral dissertation, *The Word of the Cross: Salvation as Revelation in the Fourth Gospel* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1974). In both authors the theme of revelation—in Moloney’s case, the revelation of divine love—is developed in so exclusive a fashion that there is no space for Johannine atonement theology. I have tried to redress this in a paper to appear in the pages of this journal, “Adumbrations of Atonement Theology in the Fourth Gospel.” [Editor’s note: this essay is scheduled to appear in the September 2014 issue.]

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Acts: An Exegetical Commentary. Vol. 1: *Introduction and 1:1–2:47*. By Craig S. Keener. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012, xlii + 1038 pp., \$59.99.

The presently reviewed introduction and commentary on Acts 1:1–2:47 comes to us from the pen of Craig Keener. Keener, Professor of NT at Asbury Theological Seminary, is the author of many NT commentaries including works on Matthew (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), John (2 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 1–2 Corinthians (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Revelation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), and the IVP Bible Background Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), among others. He has also been active in the historical Jesus debate and in exegetical investigations of racial and gender issues. Finally, he has shown great devotion to charismatic inquiry, most recently releasing a two-volume investigation of miracles, borne out of the work presently reviewed, entitled *Miracles: The Credibility of New Testament Accounts* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011). Those who have followed Keener's career have come to expect learned comment and extensive bibliography undergirding his research. This first installment in his proposed four-volume Acts commentary is no exception.

The first volume of Keener's Acts commentary includes an introduction (pp. 1–638) and a commentary proper on Acts 1:1–2:47 (pp. 641–1038), as the title suggests. Besides the introduction and commentary, there is an extensive bibliography, appending an additional 426 pages of primary and secondary source citations. However, this portion is included in a pdf file on CD-ROM, because, much in the legacy of Martin Hengel's *Judaism and Hellenism*, it could have constituted its own volume. With concern to reconstruct Luke's "likeliest general first-century audience," Keener's approach to Acts in this commentary is thoroughly socio-historical, akin to his previous studies, and similar to Ben Witherington's contribution on Acts (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). Nevertheless, he emphasizes his desire that the reader stay attentive to the literary-theological insights of his commentary as well (p. 26).

The introduction of this volume is impressive. It covers over half of the pages in this tome. Keener begins his introduction with a lengthy (40 pp.) prolegomenon that lays out the importance of the socio-historical investigation of Acts in view of the challenges that have faced Acts concerning its historical reliability. The rest of the introduction discusses some typical introductory topics associated with Acts, but other helpful topics that stem from Keener's personal interests and selected method also appear. One such section is on "Signs and Historiography." This section surveys a spectrum of issues such as ancient accounts of miracles outside early Christianity, early Jewish miracle workers, antisupernaturalism in antiquity to modern skepticism, and issues of Western presuppositions contrasted with the majority world. He also offers a full chapter in his introduction on women and gender in Acts that was originally intended to be a short excursus. Remarkably concerning issues of gender, Keener concludes that Luke is on the "more progressive" side of the spectrum in his historical setting. Finally, before moving on, it should be noted

that Keener's introduction, given its length and the number of topics covered, could be viable as an independent monograph. However, Keener himself says that his introduction is not to be confused with a NT theology (p. 549), and the attentive reader will observe by the frequent allusion made to the commentary proper the dependence this introduction has upon the rest of the work (even upon yet-to-be-published portions; cf. pp. 185, 492, 497). However, by no means does this take anything away from the wealth of information and incisive theological contributions this introduction alone offers. It certainly takes pride of place for the most thorough introduction to Acts for a commentary to date.

The commentary proper of Acts 1:1–2:47 covers the next 397 pages. It is organized by a traditional chapter-and-verse pattern. However, as one would guess for a commentary of this length, very rarely is more than one verse treated at a time. Typically, a verse will take on its own topical and historical-background inquiry (Keener does the same in relatively less detail in his John commentary; cf. his comment in John 1:14). For instance, Acts 1:13 is broken down into two sections, called "The Upper Room" and "The List of the Apostles." The former section includes two further parts, "Large Upper Rooms" and "Which Upper Room?" respectively. The later section is broken down into four additional parts, "Name Lists," "Historical Tradition," "Simon Peter," and "Other Names," with a related excursus on "Zealots" rooted in a study of the meaning of the apostle Simon's surname "Zealot." The detail of historical inquiry involved in this commentary is quite fantastic and stimulating.

Like "Zealots" noted in 1:13, Keener's informative and thought-provoking excurses located amidst his already detailed comment make this commentary unique. These excurses tend to be brief background discussions on a topic that fills the gaps assumed by the text, which would be too tangential in the general comment, hence the study on the surname "Zealot" noted above. Yet some can be lengthy topical studies, namely, a twenty-four-page investigation into prophecy, occasioned by the setting and events surrounding Peter's sermon in Acts 2, and a twelve-page excursus on issues of predestination and fate rooted in comment on the plan of God in Acts 2:23. There are fifteen excurses in total, helpfully highlighted in the table of contents for ease of access. The excurses are substantive, accounting for roughly ten percent of the commentary (approximately 100 pp.). They reveal implicitly where Keener places emphasis in his inquiry, with the greater proportionality of coverage given to topics concerning the nature and reality of supernatural events such as miracles, prophecy, and other forms of charismata.

Keener's work, however, is first a commentary on Acts. Keener, in his apologia for his method in the prolegomenon (pp. 3–43), notes criticism lodged against his previous works concerning his apparent lack of interaction with the text of Scripture. A brief statistical estimate of space spent on the text may surprise many who pick up this large volume. When all the obvious background investigation is stripped away, including of course the introduction and proliferating excurses, approximately 300 of 1038 pages are left specifically on the text and events recorded in Acts. This estimate, however, does not take into account certain sections not marked out as excurses that appear to have tangential connection to the text at

hand. For example, Keener spends five pages on “Studies of Modern Christian Glossolalia” (pp. 816–21), which is not an excursus. While these numbers may be initially quite shocking, especially regarding the size of the commentary, they do not rate well the value of the comment. Different methodologies take on different forms, including proportions of space covered on varying features. In addition, where Keener is interacting with the text, his copious primary source citation and interaction assumes a high level of exegetical and lexical study in this volume and in his conclusions (cf. comment and notes on 2:22–24).

Nevertheless, proportionality will not ultimately be what matters in Keener’s contribution to the critical comment on Acts. It is his approach to Acts as a reliable history of the early church that will be. Many standard commentaries on Acts begin with a noted critical stance of suspicion concerning the history documented in Acts and its sources. However, Keener’s outlook and method could not be more different. It is unique in the reason it gives to believe in what the text says and bold in its follow-through. Keener concludes that Acts is best understood as an apologetic history that would have passed muster according to the customs of Luke’s day. More significantly, he adds that “signs and claims” were likely part of “the earliest layers of tradition” (p. 91, n. 3). Characteristic of his approach to Acts, Keener notes concerning Acts 2: “In contrast with some approaches that treat Luke’s interests as merely historically descriptive (or, worse yet, merely novelistically entertaining...), Luke is presumably interested in calling the church of his own day to depend on the same empowerment of the Spirit he reports” (p. 781). For some, Keener’s approach may seem quaint, but one cannot deny his work is well grounded in the primary source investigations and secondary interaction that populate each page. *Vis-à-vis* the criticism of lack of exegetical and lexical work, in this commentary the nitty-gritty linguistic details do not appear neglected. Instead, Keener more importantly demonstrates in this commentary that, as Hengel demonstrated many years ago in his own thorough historical study, significant progress is made in grasping the meaning of a given scriptural text when the historical background is fully investigated. This is both the continued legacy that Keener’s industrious work will prove to carve out and what will make Keener’s contribution a sturdy response to such approaches of historical skepticism.

As Keener and most commentators note, in a project of this size, some important works can fall through the cracks or not come out in time in order to be considered in such a project. However, a couple of noteworthy works that are absent include: C. Kavin Rowe’s work *World Upside Down* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) and Michael Bird’s *Crossing Over Land and Sea* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010); two works that would seem to bear some importance upon Keener’s method to interpreting Acts (esp. Bird on pp. 511–16).

At the end of the day, Keener’s first installment, probably like the next three, is difficult to assess as traditional commentaries go. Keener’s method and the volume of information it furnishes breaks many molds. With no disrespect intended, it would seem best to call this volume for its practical uses a socio-historical introduction and dictionary to Acts that happens to be indexed by chapter and verse. Yet whatever use one makes of it (recognizing that it is doubtful many will read it from

cover to cover as I have), it will certainly have a great impact on the historical and theological study of Acts and on the apologetic case for the historical events recorded in Acts, natural and supernatural alike. Great appreciation must be expressed to Professor Keener for what may well be his *magnum opus*!

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Interpreting the Pauline Letters: An Exegetical Handbook. By John D. Harvey. Handbooks for New Testament Exegesis. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012. 224 pp., \$22.99 paper.

A variety of literary genres are employed in the NT, and different genres require different methods of interpretation. Kregel's four-volume series, *Handbooks for New Testament Exegesis*, aims to meet this need by providing genre-specific guidelines for interpreting the NT. It focuses on three major literary genres employed in the NT, namely, narrative (the Gospels and Acts), letter (Paul's letters and the general letters), and apocalypse (Revelation). Harvey's book, published first in this series, deals with Paul's letters.

Following the guidelines set forth for the series, Harvey organizes his book in eight chapters. In the first three chapters, he establishes a framework of interpretation by examining the genre (chap. 1), the historical background (chap. 2), and the theology (chap. 3) of Paul's letters. In the next three chapters, he provides step-by-step instructions for how to determine and translate texts (chap. 4), how to interpret passages (chap. 5), and how to communicate a biblical message to a contemporary audience (chap. 6). He then demonstrates his methods with two specific examples (chap. 7) and concludes the book with a list of selected resources (chap. 8).

The content of each chapter can be summarized briefly as follows. In chapter 1, Harvey examines Paul's letters in the context of the first-century Mediterranean culture, which he defines as oral, rhetorical, and literary, and concludes that Paul adopted and creatively adapted the letter genre to inform, request, exhort, and command the congregations he had planted. Consequently, his letters are similar to other first-century letters in overall structure, purpose, and use of formulaic language, but Paul's works are considerably longer and more complex and flexible than other letters. After making these observations, Harvey analyzes Paul's letters on three levels: (1) at the macro-level—the typical three-part division (i.e. introduction, body, and conclusion) and subunits (e.g. greeting, thanksgiving, apostolic parousia, and apostolic apologia); (2) at the middle-level—the subgenres, oral patterns, and epistolary conventions that occur within the body of Paul's letters; and (3) at the micro-level—the structural features within a sentence.

In chapter 2, Harvey first defends Paul's authorship of 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, and the letters to Timothy and Titus, as well as the literary integrity of 2 Corinthians and Philippians. Next he focuses on issues pertaining to Pauline chronology. After a careful examination first of the data found in Paul's letters and then the data in Acts, he concludes that Acts provides an overall frame-

work for Paul's ministry that is impossible to derive from Paul's letters alone and that the information found in Acts corresponds well to the basic periods derived from the letters. In concluding this chapter, he briefly describes the historical background of each of Paul's letters in light of the chronological framework he has just established.

In chapter 3, Harvey summarizes the overall structure of Paul's theology and the major themes of each of Paul's letters. He explains Paul's theology by using antithetic pairs frequently employed in Paul's letters (e.g. flesh and Spirit, law and grace, Adam and Christ, old man and new man, etc.). For Paul, he states, there are only two spheres of human existence, namely, "in Adam" and "in Christ." Anyone who is saved by faith is transferred from the sphere of Adam to the sphere of Christ, and everything else is related to this event. Harvey thus explains Paul's theology under the following subheadings: "the great transfer," "the transfer explained," "the transfer pictures," "the means of transfer," and "the congregation of those transferred." He then describes the major themes and unique features of each of Paul's letters under three categories: (1) the missionary letters (Galatians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Corinthians, and Romans); (2) the imprisonment letters (Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians); and (3) the pastoral letters (1–2 Timothy and Titus). In general, Paul's missionary letters focus on the challenges facing the local churches he planted; his imprisonment letters on the big picture of the universal church; and his pastoral letters on the orderliness and godly conduct within the church of the living God.

In chapter 4, Harvey explains, by using Rom 5:1–2 as an example, how to evaluate textual variants and determine the original text and also how to translate it. He suggests considering all extrinsic, transcriptional, and intrinsic probabilities before determining the text. For translation, he provides a six-step guideline and suggests translating the entire passage, always considering both semantics and syntax.

In chapter 5, Harvey provides instructions with specific examples for the exegesis of passages in Paul's letters. Here he emphasizes the importance of historical, literary, and theological analysis. When interpreting a passage, he states, one must investigate (1) the broad historical, cultural, and religious context, as well as the specific circumstances pertaining to each letter; (2) the general and immediate literary context and the genre, structure, syntax, rhetoric, and key words of the passage; and (3) the theological significance of the passage in light of the overall teachings of Scripture.

A shift takes place from exegesis to exposition in chapter 6. Harvey offers three steps for bringing a first-century message to a twenty-first century audience: (1) first-century synthesis; (2) twenty-first-century appropriation; and (3) homiletical packaging. The key to the first-century synthesis involves determining the central point and the shared need of a passage. For this task, Harvey points to two questions: (1) "What did Paul say?" and (2) "Why did he say it?" To appropriate the first-century message for a twenty-first century audience, he asks three questions: (1) "How does the passage connect?" (2) "What does the passage correct?" and (3) "What does the passage commend?" For the task of homiletical packaging, he advises to focus on one thing that listeners need to know or do and to organize a

sermon either deductively or inductively depending on the literary type and structure of the passage.

In chapter 7, Harvey provides two specific examples to demonstrate the strategies he has introduced in the preceding chapters. The two examples he uses are Col 3:1–4 and Phil 3:12–16. In the final chapter (chap. 8), he includes a list of helpful resources for interpreting Paul's letters. For NT commentary series and for commentaries on Paul's letters, he supplies brief annotations.

It is impressive that Harvey covers an incredibly wide range of topics and issues in a small book. Due to the complexity of some of the issues, he easily could have gotten bogged down in minute details in his discussion, but in most parts he remains focused on main issues and presents big pictures. His organization of the material is clear and easy to follow, his summaries are concise and informative, and his examples and charts are specific and appropriate. His summary of Paul's theology is particularly intriguing, although the structure of Paul's theology seems oversimplified.

Harvey devotes a large section (17 pp.) to the discussion of Pauline chronology, while providing brief summary discussions on other issues. His discussion is needed and helpful, but it does not have the same conciseness Harvey demonstrates in other parts of the book. Interestingly, he accepts Paul's authorship of the pastoral letters and explains their historical background as if they were written after Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment, but his chronology ends in AD 62 and provides Bo Reicke's proposal as a possibility that dates all three pastoral letters before and during Paul's first Roman imprisonment.

It is surprising and somewhat disappointing that Harvey devotes only one chapter (chap. 5) to the explanation of exegetical methods. Even in this chapter, the first half is devoted to a broad and general description of NT history and the locales of the churches to which Paul wrote his letters. This kind of general information could have been included in chapter 2 in which he describes the historical background to Paul's letters, and more attention should have been given to the exploration and explanation of the principles and methods of the actual exegetical process.

Despite a few shortfalls, Harvey's overall treatment of the subject is even-handed and insightful, and the materials that he presents are informative and relevant for interpreting Paul's letters. There is no doubt that this book will prove to be an excellent resource for seminary students, pastors, and advanced lay people who want to deepen their understanding of Paul's letters and sharpen their exegetical and expository skills.

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Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God. By Brian S. Rosner. New Studies in Biblical Theology 31. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013, 249 pp., \$24.00 paper.

Brian Rosner, Principal of Ridley Melbourne Mission and Ministry College, aims to provide a readable yet comprehensive study of one of the most difficult subjects in NT theology, Paul and the law. Rosner begins by acknowledging the complexity of his subject. “Like a big jigsaw puzzle with most of the pieces missing, and the box lid thrown out, there seem to be numerous possible configurations, none of which fits every piece” (p. 20). Before suggesting a way forward, Rosner addresses a number of important preliminaries. Unlike many works on Paul and the law, Rosner’s study makes use of evidence from Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles (p. 26). Rosner argues that *nomos* in Paul most commonly refers to the first five books of the sacred Scriptures, and he contends that Paul generally deals with the law as a unity (p. 28). The question, Rosner claims, is not *which parts* of the law Paul is thinking of in a given instance, but the law *as what*. After handling introductory matters, Rosner suggests a fresh approach. In his view, Paul does three things with the law: (1) polemical repudiation; (2) radical replacement; and (3) whole-hearted reappropriation of the law as prophecy and as wisdom (pp. 39–41).

In chapter 2, Rosner surveys Paul’s explicit repudiation of the law. He starts by investigating the assertion that believers are “not under the law.” Rosner next explores Paul’s use of Lev 18:5 in both Galatians 3 and Romans 10, arguing: “Here we come to the heart of Paul’s opposition to the law. It is not just that the law is obsolete and a new phase of salvation history has arrived. Nor is it that the law marked off the Jewish people and not the new people of God.... For Paul, the essence of the law as law-covenant or legal code is its call for something to be done in order to find life, and this path has failed, due to the universal sinfulness of humanity, and instead the law has led to death” (p. 72). In the final sections of the chapter, Rosner examines two further instances of Paul’s negative critique of the law (1 Tim 1:8–10; Eph 2:15).

Chapter 3 focuses on what Paul does not say about Christians and the law (that one might have expected him to say). Rosner notes that, while the “walking” theme is prominent in Paul’s writings, Paul never says that believers should “walk” according to the law (p. 87). Additionally, Rosner draws attention to the commonly noted point that, when Paul speaks of Christians positively vis-à-vis the law, he does not say that they “keep” or “obey” the law, but rather that they “fulfill” it. Rosner expands this discussion, observing that Paul does not say, as he does of Jews, that believers “rely on” the law, “boast” in the law, know God’s will through the law, are educated in the law, have knowledge or truth because of the law, “do” the law, “observe” the law, “transgress” the law, or possess the law as a “written code” (pp. 88–100). Finally, Rosner points out that Paul does not call the law “letter,” “book,” “decrees,” or “commandments,” when mentioning it as a positive possession of the Christian community (pp. 108–9).

In chapter 4, Rosner shows that a motif of replacement with respect to the law is deeply embedded in Paul’s thought; the apostle not only refrains from saying

certain things about the law with reference to Christians, but he often shifts the focus from the law to something else. Rosner examines the Christ-Torah antithesis (Galatians 2; Philippians 3), arguing that, if once the law held a central place for Paul the Jew, for Paul the Christian that place is exclusively occupied by Christ (p. 114). Rosner next examines the intriguing expressions “law of Christ,” “law of faith,” and “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Gal 6:2; 1 Cor 9:21; Rom 3:27; 8:1), which Paul uses as substitutes for the Law of Moses. He concludes, “The ‘law of faith’ and the ‘law of the Spirit’ point to the crucial nature of faith in Christ and the work of the Spirit, and ‘the law of Christ’ points us to living our new lives after his example and under Christ’s lordship” (pp. 120–21). Following this, Rosner turns to the way in which believers “fulfill” the law (Rom 8:3–4; 13:8–9; Gal 5:13–14). He concludes the chapter with a study of the three texts in which Paul rejects circumcision and replaces it with something else (1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:6; 6:15).

Having dedicated chapters 2 through 4 to a discussion of Paul’s negative stance toward the law, Rosner devotes chapters 5 and 6 to the task of unpacking Paul’s more positive take on the law. He contends, first, that if believers do not read the law as legal code or law-covenant, they do read it as a witness to faith in Christ. Rosner reviews five studies of the Pentateuch that, in his judgment, together present a compelling case for regarding the law as having a prophetic dimension. The recent works of Walter Moberly, John Sailhamer, Francis Watson, Gary Millar, and William Horbury highlight the way in which prophetic elements of the Law of Moses were amplified in early Jewish interpretation. Rosner then investigates the book of Romans, arguing that Paul himself consistently reads the law as prophecy of the gospel (pp. 148–57).

The sixth chapter tackles the especially controversial topic of the continuing role of the law in Paul’s ethics. In Rosner’s view, the law *as law-covenant* has been abolished, but the law is still of value for Christian conduct *as wisdom*. Rosner argues that this positive appropriation of the law for moral teaching is evidence neither of inconsistency (contradicting the assertion that believers are not “under the law”) nor of a partial abrogation of the law (civil and ceremonial, but not moral). His argument unfolds as follows. He first reviews the debate over the continuing role of the law in Pauline ethics (pp. 160–65). He next considers the use of the law in the Psalms as a forerunner to Paul’s use of the law as wisdom (pp. 165–74). Rosner then explores the “wisdom” character of the law and the character of Paul as a wisdom teacher (pp. 174–83). Finally, he looks at a number of examples of the use of the law as wisdom in the Pauline corpus (pp. 188–204).

The brief concluding chapter summarizes the argument of the monograph. Rosner contends that eight of Paul’s letters exhibit all three of the moves he suggests: (1) polemical repudiation; (2) radical replacement; and (3) wholehearted reappropriation. He further points out that six of the eight letters have both types of reappropriation, namely, as prophecy and as wisdom (p. 209).

Rosner’s work is one of the most accessible studies of the subject I have come across. It is written at an intermediate level and will be quite helpful for motivated parishioners, theological students, and pastors. Rosner’s study stands apart from other helpful works, such as those of Frank Thielman and Stephen Wester-

holm, in that it is largely thematic and gives little time to the history of interpretation. I am especially delighted to see another study of Paul and the law that allows the disputed letters to contribute to the conversation. Even if these letters are not given primary status, I am convinced that they must be allowed to speak. One of the most unique and illuminating sections of Rosner's work is his discussion of what Paul does not say about Christians and the law. However, it is precisely the points raised in this section that seem to weaken Rosner's argument for a reappropriation of the law as wisdom. It remains unclear to me how believers—those who do *not* know God's will through the law, who are *not* educated in the law, who do *not* have knowledge or truth because of the law, and who do *not* observe the law (p. 84)—are to look to the Mosaic law for instruction/advice for living (pp. 137, 181, 184, 208). It is also unclear to me whether or not, on Rosner's view, Mosaic law is on a par with apostolic commands. On the one hand, he argues that believers are *obligated to obey* apostolic instructions (pp. 38, 129). On the other hand, he asserts that, when Paul appeals to the Mosaic law for pastoral purposes, he appeals to it as *advice* concerning how to walk in wisdom (pp. 184, 208). While I am in basic agreement with Rosner's primary argument that Paul does three things with the law—he repudiates it, replaces it, and reappropriates it—I am not yet persuaded that the terms "prophecy" and "wisdom" capture the third move.

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Justification Reconsidered: Rethinking a Pauline Theme. By Stephen Westerholm. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013, viii + 104 pp., \$15.00 paper.

What I love most about Stephen Westerholm is his ability to articulate and celebrate the freshness of the old perspective on Paul. Recent revisions are critically explored, while old assumptions are resurrected to new life. When I want a good, honest look at Paul, I go to Westerholm. His recent book, *Justification Reconsidered*, is no different, even though the book in many ways is predictable. It is the same Westerholm of his two earlier treatises on Paul: *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) and his longer tome *Perspectives Old and New on Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004). However, in *Justification Reconsidered*, Westerholm focuses more narrowly on Paul's understanding of justification by faith rather than the whole gamut of Pauline soteriology (in particular, the role of the law), which was the subject of his two earlier books.

Justification Reconsidered begins in typical Westerholm fashion. After acknowledging the rise of recent revisions of Paul and offering a traditional reading in their stead (pp. 1–22), Westerholm surveys the views of several key players in the ever-growing discussion of Paul's view of justification, including those of E. P. Sanders (pp. 23–34), N. T. Wright (pp. 51–74), and James D. G. Dunn (pp. 75–85). Some of his evaluation is not new to those familiar with Westerholm's previous works. However, his recent book is not simply a summary of his older two; he includes a very helpful interaction with Wright's book on justification (*Justification: God's Plan*

and *Paul's Vision* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009]) and also adds a brief interaction with Douglas Campbell's apocalyptic view of Paul (pp. 87–94) codified in his recent book *The Deliverance of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). Overall, Westerholm's book is readable, concise—yet as thorough as it needs to be—and biblically sound. Westerholm possesses a knack, some would say a gift, of unleashing the truth of Scripture while graciously, yet pointedly, critiquing recent proposals that may carry some merit, but only some.

Inasmuch as the book is focused on justification by faith, Westerholm's primary opponent is N. T. Wright. This is why his longest chapter, which constitutes nearly one quarter of the book's total pages, is devoted to dismantling Wright's definition of "righteousness" as "not 'moral righteousness'" but "the status of the person whom the court has vindicated" (cited on p. 56). Justification, according to Wright, means "to be reckoned by God to be a true member of his family, and hence with the right to share table fellowship" (cited on p. 57). In a short sweep of righteousness terminology in the OT, Westerholm points out that "righteousness" refers to "what one ought to do" (p. 59), and one is "righteous" when he does what God demands. (Westerholm never specifies whether one must be *sinless* or *perfect* in order to be righteous by OT standards.) "So 'righteousness' does not mean, and by its very nature *cannot* mean, membership in a covenant," concludes Westerholm (p. 63)—a direct refutation of Wright's definition that has been trumpeted for nearly two decades now.

When Westerholm comes to Paul, he argues that "covenant status was not the issue" (p. 65)—disagreeing, again, with Wright. Even though no one is righteous (Rom 3:10–20; cf. Psalm 143), God declares the ungodly to *be righteous*; that is, as having met the moral obligations of God. Paul believes such things because "God can rightly declare sinners righteous when the sins that kept them from being righteous were borne by the crucified Christ" (p. 69). Christ took our sin while we took his righteousness (p. 70; cf. 2 Cor 5:21), and that is why God can declare us to be innocent.

Westerholm has rightly identified a potential error in Wright's understanding of justification. My only concern is that Westerholm may be making a false dichotomy. It is true that we should not lexically define *dikaiosunē*, with Wright, as having the right to share a meal at the family table. Lexicographers would certainly beg for more evidence. Yet I wonder if Wright's language needs to be pressed so far. Certainly being "right before God through faith in Jesus" and "being a member of the new covenant on equal footing with Jews" are not at odds with each other. Although covenant language is infrequent in Paul, the concept of the new covenant as the overarching framework of salvation is lingering—as with the Trinity—behind everything he says. I do not think I agree with Westerholm that "covenant status was not the issue." Perhaps it was not the *main* issue, or maybe it was not the explicit issue. Yet certainly to consider it a non-issue would be misleading. Perhaps Westerholm's critique is more against the *rhetoric* of Wright, or perhaps his (over-)emphasis of several points, and not with the *substance* of what he says. In my own reading of Wright and Westerholm, two of the most influential Pauline scholars in

my own thinking, I do not see a massive difference in how they understand the apostle, though I do see definite points of emphasis.

In any case, I cannot more highly recommend Westerholm's new book to anyone who has an interest in Paul. For one, he has the uncanny ability to make an old perspective sound fresh. "God allowed human sinfulness to spend all its force on the suffering Christ until, drained of all evil, it was 'expiated' and exists no more" (p. 70). You can find such truth in many traditional scholars, but few can repackage it in rhetoric that knifes its way into your heart as if hearing it for the first time. This is why Westerholm's book, although not entirely original or new, is a must read for all seekers of Paul. It is short. It is to the point. It interacts with some key Pauline scholars, but not all (thankfully). It focuses on the subject of Pauline thought most scrutinized over the past forty years (justification). Most importantly, it confidently and clearly shows that a traditional reading of Paul, although it may need a tune-up, is in no way in need of a complete overhaul.

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Paul and Judaism Revisited: A Study of Divine and Human Agency in Salvation. By Preston M. Sprinkle. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013. 256 pp., \$24.00 paper.

This book is a sequel to Preston Sprinkle's *Law and Life: The Interpretation of Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and in Paul* (WUNT 2/241; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008). Its stated aim is "to compare soteriological motifs in Paul and Qumran in order to better understand how these two Second Temple Jewish communities understood divine and human agency in salvation" (p. 36). The upside of the work is its industrious workmanship, thorough up-to-date scholarship, and exemplary organization, all presented in a style that is both clear and engaging. It contains a skillful analysis of such issues as the eschatological Spirit, anthropological pessimism in Paul and Qumran, justification in Paul and Qumran, judgment according to works, divine and human agency in early Judaism, and the soteriology of Paul and Judaism.

In terms of a critical assessment, a number of matters come to the fore. First, there is the question: Is the Deuteronomistic literature wholly Deuteronomistic (p. 46)? For Sprinkle, "Deuteronomy itself is not entirely Deuteronomistic in terms of God's restoration of Israel. Retribution theology is *dominant*, but other voices break through" (p. 47). Sprinkle writes that Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history are not "stubbornly univocal," because portions of both show signs of "a more prophetic hope of restoration, where forgiveness and restoration will come through God's unilateral pardon" (p. 49). Yet these formulations invoke the question: What is Deuteronomistic anyway? The answer should be that "Deuteronomistic" is defined by the book itself, including the divine initiative in the restoration of Israel. The "other voices" are also integral to the Deuteronomistic program.

Second, there is the claim that Isaiah 55–66 is "less consistent" in its conception of divine and human agency (p. 51). Yet such a reading does not allow the text

of Isaiah as a whole to speak for itself. In the matter of exile and return, there is more than one side to the coin, and the prophecy must be given a holistic appraisal in order to allow the prophet to speak for himself. The attempt to dismiss Isa 56:1 from consideration is an instance of special pleading. The *prima facie* significance of the verse is a command for Israel to exercise fidelity to the covenant. It will not do to maintain that this demand of obedience is not the same as saying that “God will require obedience as a prerequisite of eschatological restoration” (p. 51). Moreover, to assert that a “few passages depict Israel’s repentance as a condition of eschatological salvation” (p. 51) is at variance with Sprinkle’s thesis that the “prophetic scheme” is entirely unilateral in terms of “God’s restorative action” (p. 38). The factor of special pleading is further highlighted by the treatment of Isa 55:6–7, which is dismissed as an “anomaly,” because words like “seek, forsake and return,” along with the concept of conditional pardon, are not typical of this section of Isaiah but are characteristic of the Deuteronomistic literature (p. 52). Yet whether “characteristic” or not, this call to repentance and seeking the Lord is an integral part of the prophecy, and to write off the demand as an “anomaly” is to impose a value judgment arising from a foregone conclusion. Even a smattering of passages reveals that the conditional factor of restoration from exile is observable in Isa 1:19–20; 7:9; 58:13–14; Jer 4:1–2; 7:5–7; 12:16–17; 13:17; 15:19; 17:24, 27; 18:7–10; 22:4, 5; 26:3–4; 36:3; 42:10, 13, 15; 50:4–5; Ezek 20:11, 13, 21, along with imperatives for the nation to return to the Lord (Isa 46:12–13; 55:1–7; 56:1; Hos 6:1–3) and to live the life of the covenant (Mic 6:8). Granted, Israel is incapable of turning from evil, so that restoration must come through the initiative of God. Nevertheless, the conditionality of repentance on the people’s part remains intact. The same approach is taken to Jeremiah 32. For Sprinkle, Jeremiah “creatively” uses stock phrases from Deuteronomy and inverts them (p. 58). Then comes a rather surprising assertion for an evangelical: “This can only be a deliberate challenge to Deuteronomy’s stress on human agency, which is here transferred to divine agency” (p. 59). Additionally, maintains Sprinkle, it appears from Jeremiah 31 and 32 that the prophet uses Deuteronomic language as a deliberate contrast to Deuteronomy. In an extended footnote (p. 59, n. 71), Sprinkle endeavors to skirt the reality of restoration as conditioned by repentance (Jer 26:3; 29:14; 36:3; 50:4–5). In so doing, these texts are declared to be instances of “theological inconsistency.” I would aver that such passages are only “inconsistent” with Sprinkle’s underlying premise. At heart, the “Deuteronomic” and “Prophetic” programs of restoration differ only in emphasis, as acknowledged in the summary of chapter 2.

Third, in dealing with Gal 3:10–14, it is proposed that Paul is arguing against the “Deuteronomic scheme” of restoration evidenced in the Qumran literature. Sprinkle thus continues to press for the strained dichotomy whereby, in the “Deuteronomic scheme,” the works of the law are “the prescribed means of escaping the covenant curse” (p. 89), as though the requirement of covenant faithfulness is absent in the “Prophetic scheme.” It is not so surprising, then, to read that Paul contrasts Hab 2:4 with Lev 18:5, the former implementing a *Prophetic* means of restoration, while the latter summarizes the *Deuteronomic* principle of restoration (p. 157).

Fourth, the chapter on the eschatological Spirit asserts again the *unilateral* redemption and transformation of the people of God. It is not that this conclusion is wrong per se, but it fails to balance the divine sovereignty with the call to repentance (cf. Rom 2:4), especially when the preaching of Paul in Acts is taken into account (Acts 13:25; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20). As in the Prophets, divine sovereignty and repentance go hand in hand.

Fifth, the treatment of anthropological pessimism in Paul and Qumran poses the question: Does humanity possess the unaided ability to initiate a return to God and obey his laws? The answer is yes and no. According to didactic texts, yes; but according to some hymnic texts, no. Hence, the portrait at Qumran is not uniform. This general conclusion is sound enough, because as Sprinkle observes, “ancient authors probably did not share our modern obsession with systematized thought” (p. 144). That said, this survey of texts does not take sufficient account of the underlying assumption of at least most Jewish authors—the covenant. What is termed “unaided ability” (pp. 128, 134, 135) to comply with God’s demands bypasses the reality of the bond with Israel, the constant underlying premise of Second Temple Judaism (e.g. Sir 15:14–15; *Pss. Sol.* 9:4–5). Even the Qumran *Hymns*, which appear to be so “pessimistic,” are the outgrowth and reflection of an awareness that the community is in covenant relation with its God, whose standards are perfection.

Sixth, in pursuing justification in Paul and Qumran, the point is reiterated that Paul’s doctrine of the justification of the ungodly should be understood “through the lens of *Prophetic* restoration” (p. 160; also pp. 243, 249). Sprinkle detects a tension between this and the declaration of Exod 23:7 that God “will not justify the ungodly.” However, the problem is that these Scroll passages are context-specific, pertaining to the justice to be enacted by the courts in concrete cases of civil law. As such, they have little, if any, bearing on Paul’s panoramic pronouncements regarding the justification of the ungodly as a biblical-theological theme. Sprinkle recognizes this to be the case in CD 1:18–21, having to do with “earthly courts” (pp. 161–62). Nevertheless, he argues, the Qumran courtroom is analogous to how God accepts people. Therefore, contrary to Paul, God does not justify the ungodly but the righteous: “Paul’s ‘justification of the ungodly’ formula is not just different than the type of justification endorsed by Qumran—it seems to be in critical dialogue with it” (p. 162). Yet the difficulty remains that a specific has been turned into a universal. At Qumran, God vindicates those members of the community who should have been exonerated because of their innocence vis-à-vis the precepts of covenant law. True enough, according to Sprinkle, God could never justify the wicked; but that is because the “wicked” are those outside the covenant, either foreigners or apostates. Paul’s thought, by contrast, transcends such limitations and envisions the justification of the “ungodly” in the sense that *asebēs* bore in its first-century setting (i.e. uncircumcised and non-Torah observant). The argumentation of Romans 4 is that the “ungodly” can be justified and walk in the steps of Abraham their father without first becoming “honorary Jews.” In brief, CD 1:18–21 does not form an actual analogy to Romans 4. Additionally, it is quite right that what sets Paul apart from Qumran is his “radical statements about God’s *initial* acceptance of the wicked, who have demonstrated no righteousness” (p. 170). By

way of contrast, again, the Community is narrowly concerned with its members and *their* eschatological exoneration; outsiders are simply assumed to be lost. Paul, by contrast, casts a much wider net by bringing the *asebēs* into covenant relationship with the God of Israel.

Seventh, in taking up judgment according to works, Sprinkle is quite right that human obedience, which is altogether necessary for a positive verdict in the last judgment, is elicited by the ongoing work of God in the believer. "Obedience will matter on judgment day, but it is impossible—or at least un-Pauline—to separate what the believer has done from what the spirit and Christ have done in the believer" (p. 179). Later, it is "unilateral grace" that empowers obedience for a positive verdict in the judgment (p. 185). The downside to the chapter pertains to the "apparent contradiction" between Rom 2:13 and 3:20 (p. 186), whereby Sprinkle maintains that in 2:13 Paul has essentially reverted to the "Deuteronomic paradigm" (p. 188) and then seeks to alleviate the difficulty of the "apparent contradiction" by submitting a reworked version of the hypothetical interpretation of the verse. In so doing, he posits that Paul's argument is rooted in a "*Prophetic-Deuteronomic* dialogue" (p. 189). Stated otherwise, "Paul affirms a *Deuteronomic* soteriology as a foil to be later denied" (p. 191). The problem is that "Prophetic" and "Deuteronomic" are again bifurcated in a manner that suggests an inconsistency between these divisions of the Hebrew Bible. At heart, the understanding of Rom 2:13 is enlightened by the working principle of the Mosaic covenant as voiced by Lev 18:5 and the refrain of Deuteronomy, "This do and live" (4:1, 10, 40; 5:29–33; 6:1–2, 18, 24; 7:12–13). In this outlook, "doing the law" is the language of perseverance in the covenant. Paul, then, lifts this covenantal language from the OT and applies it to perseverance in Christ. His own commentary is provided by Rom 8:1–11, where "doing the law" is eschatologically defined as walking by the Spirit and putting to death the deeds of the body. The redeeming feature of chapter 7 is the recognition that both Paul and the Qumran hymnist(s) agree that "the obedience of the covenant member, which is necessary for judgment day, is enabled by the grace of God" (p. 202), with the appropriate qualification that obedience for Paul is made both possible and inevitable through Christ and the Spirit (pp. 202–3, 241).

Finally, there is Sprinkle's bottom line that Christian Paul's theology shifted from the "*Deuteronomic* conventions of Moses" to "the *Prophetic* framework," meaning that "eschatological salvation will not come through Israel's initiative but God's decisive intervention" (p. 249). Apart from pressing the same unwarranted dichotomy as before, there is the neglect of a text such as Deut 32:36–42, according to which the Lord will vindicate his people, have compassion on his servants, and take vengeance on his enemies. This announcement follows hard upon the promise that the Lord will restore Israel's fortunes, have compassion on the people, and regather them from exile (Deut 30:1–10). For Deuteronomy, no less than the Prophets, Yahweh is the prime mover in eschatological deliverance.

Notwithstanding these various reservations, Sprinkle's study makes for stimulating reading and provides a springboard into additional explorations of Paul's letters in their historical milieu, particularly as the "New Perspective" debate will probably carry on for some time to come.

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A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of James. By Dale C. Allison, Jr. International Critical Commentary. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013, xlix + 790 pp., \$130.00.

After ninety-seven years of service, James Hardy Ropes's ICC commentary on the Epistle of James has received a much-needed update by Dale Allison. Originally published in 1916, Ropes's commentary broke new ground in several areas of study of this letter and has since served as a storehouse of historical and exegetical data. As one might imagine, there has been a significant amount of work done in James in the intervening years and Allison's contribution significantly expands on its predecessor—being more than twice its size (319 versus 790 pp.). In keeping with the ICC tradition, Allison's commentary focuses on historical-critical issues, taking up detailed discussions of textual variants and literary parallels from Jewish and Greco-Roman literature. Yet at the same time his work demonstrates a concern "with the history of interpretation and reception." Allison notes, "Most critical commentaries tend instead to privilege recent work, their footnotes typically citing ancient sources and modern critics, with little in between" (p. 2). Avoiding such omission, Allison's work is as conversant with Patristic or Reformation-era interpreters as he is with the latest technical scholarship. The range of scholarship demonstrated in this work boggles the mind and provides one of the most detailed verse-by-verse commentaries on the Greek text of James, while seamlessly weaving together the letter's history of influence and reception.

After a comprehensive bibliography, which is itself remarkable in scope (pp. xi–xlix), Allison offers a thorough discussion of not only the usual historical issues (author, date, *Sitz im Leben*) in the introduction (pp. 1–109), but also includes detailed discussions of the text's genre, style, sources, grammar, and reception (see the especially strong sections on genre [pp. 71–76]; structure [pp. 76–81]; and literary characteristics [pp. 81–88]). The only other recent commentary that rivals Allison's comprehensive introduction is Johnson's Anchor Bible Commentary in 1995, and his detailed study of James's Greek grammar and style rivals Joseph Mayor's magisterial commentary first published in 1892.

Noting the possibility of slotting James into a pre-AD 70 Palestine provenance, Allison concludes one "can equally read the epistle...as a second-century pseudepigraphon composed in the diaspora" (p. 13). Especially in light of known pseudepigrapha written in the name of James (*viz.* the *Protevangelium of James*, the *Apocryphon of James*, the *First and Second Apocalypse of James*), for which no one defends authenticity, Allison suggests resisting the claim that the Epistle of James is likewise a pseud-

epigraphon might betray “a canonical or theological bias at work” (p. 13). The existence of these late writings falsely attributed to James increases the plausibility, for Allison, that the letter’s ascription of authorship is fictive. However, his judgment does not rest upon these later pseudepigrapha alone. An issue well-known to those working in James is whether there are any references to the letter before AD 150. Here opinion is sharply divided over the contested parallels between James and the Shepherd of Hermas. Mayor judged that Hermas’s use of James was “obvious” and Johnson argued that literary dependence is “virtually certain,” while Ropes denied that James served as a source of Hermas and Martin Dibelius doubted that one could come to a confident conclusion on the matter at all. Allison notes, “because of Hermas’ habit of thoroughly rewriting his sources, assurance on the matter is inappropriate” (p. 23). Though there are several echoes of shared language between the texts, this less than striking evidence leads Allison to admit: “This commentator has gone back and forth on the issue over the years and is still uncertain what to think. The pertinent footnotes show that most—but not all—of the parallels are poor evidence for literary dependence” (p. 23). Rather than such language linking James and Hermas, Allison follows O. J. F. Seitz’s argument that the parallels indicate that the now lost text Eldad and Modad (which Allison also thinks stands behind the unknown text citation in 4:5) influenced both James and Hermas. “Having worked through James verse by verse and considered, at every relevant point, the parallels,” Allison argues, “this author has found no sure trace of James in literature from the first or first half of the second century” (p. 20). In addition, noting James’s “struggle” to enter the canon, he concludes that “although not all of the arguments marshaled to deny authorship by the brother of Jesus have merit... taken together [they] tip the scale” (p. 28). Regrettably, Allison concludes, “our letter is a pseudepigraphon, so 1.1 cannot be taken at face value” (p. 95). So much of Allison’s work is the epitome of detailed and humble historical inquiry; however, his judgment regarding authorship, and setting in general, largely depends upon an argument from silence.

A second issue worth noting is Allison’s brief discussion of the structure of the letter (another issue fraught with difficulty for students of James). His discussion begins by identifying the one conclusion most recent scholars agree upon, that Dibelius was wrong to interpret James as though each section “were quarantined from their surroundings.” Opinion has shifted away from his assessment of radical discontinuity; however, “those who agree that James displays thematic coherence disagree on how precisely the book is put together” (p. 77). Generally agreeing with Richard Bauckham’s minimalist structure (“1.1 is the prescript, 1.2–27 serves as an introduction of sorts, and 2.1–5.20 is the main body”), Allison notes, “Regrettably it is hard to say much more, and one expects no forthcoming consensus on the issue” (p. 78). He continues, “The debates regarding these and related issues—above all the coherence of the aphoristic units of chap. 1—will never conclude because James too often fails to demarcate its units in evident ways. Scholars may wish to draw straight lines, but James remains fuzzy” (p. 78). A second scholarly consensus, if it can be called that, is to note the function of James 1 with respect to the rest of the letter. “Another clear fact” Allison notes, “is that chap. 1 introduces

all of these topics. Even though 1.2–27 is not exactly a table of contents, it does to significant degree portend what follows” (p. 79, where he helpfully notes the parallel structure in *Pseudo-Phocylides* 3–8).

In addition to introductory issues, as one would expect from an ICC volume, the commentary section moves carefully phrase by phrase through the Greek text. In the remainder of the commentary (pp. 113–790—there are no indices), Allison marks out textual units (1:1, 2–4, 5–8, 9–11, 12–15, 16–18, 19–21, 22–25, 26–27; 2:1–13, 14–26; 3:1–12, 13–18; 4:1–12; 4:13–5:6, 7–11, 12, and 13–20) and provides a chapter-length discussion for each. Every chapter follows the same outline: title of the section, translation of the textual unit, history of interpretation and reception, and exegesis (by far the longest section of each chapter). Though there is not nearly enough space here to do it justice, it is nonetheless worthwhile to give an illustration of some of the riches waiting to be unearthed here. In his discussion of the history of interpretation and reception of Jas 2:1–13, Allison begins by recalling how verses 1–4 were used in debates over congregational seating arrangements in the nineteenth-century Church of Scotland. This text was marshaled by James Begg against the idea of renting church seats; Begg argued that James “desired the poorest man to meet with the richest on a level in the House of God,—and that as a matter of right, not favour. As they shall all meet in the grave, and at the judgment, it is the aim of Scripture that they should equally meet under the sound of the Gospel” (p. 368). As another of the many gems in this section, Allison outlines Ward’s 1966 argument that James chapter 2 depicts a Christian court scene and notes that recent “literature leaves the impression...that Ward’s proposal is his discovery” (p. 370). However, Allison notes that the history of interpretation shows otherwise. Both Matthew Henry, and Manton before him, read this passage in the same way. According to Allison’s quote of Manton, “the synagogue here spoken of is not the church assembly, but the ecclesiastical court, or convention, for the decision of strifes, wherein they were not to favour the cause of the rich against the poor” (p. 371). In revealing this connection Allison opines, “One can only wonder why, in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, this very interesting understanding of 2.1–7 unaccountably fell by the wayside and then had to wait a century before being resurrected” (p. 372). This demonstrates well not only the value of *Wirkungsgeschichte* but also the danger of screening it out from our exegetical practice.

Space is limited to offer examples of Allison’s erudite and adroit exegesis of the text, but it is present at every turn. Though there are conclusions with which to quibble, this commentary is an exemplar of careful historical and linguistic judgment. Noteworthy is the fact that where confidence in coming to an interpretive conclusion is intractable, Allison is not only careful to note such, but many times humbly notes his own (but really historical-criticism’s) limitation to come to a conclusion. It is just this balance (of masterful competence and humility) that makes so much of Allison’s exegesis compelling. Because of its vast scope of research and carefully weighed positions, Allison’s commentary should instantly become one of

the first resources to which students of James turn. There is no doubt that his work will be greeted with enthusiasm and gratitude.

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Riches, Poverty, and the Faithful: Perspectives on Wealth in the Second Temple Period and the Apocalypse of John. By Mark D. Mathews. Society for NT Studies Monograph Series 154. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, xvi + 276 pp., \$99.00.

In *Riches, Poverty, and the Faithful*, Mark D. Mathews, Teaching Elder and Senior Pastor at Bethany Presbyterian Church in Oxford, PA, attempts to show that John's perspective on wealth in the book of Revelation is not informed by the particular social situation of the readers but by Second Temple Jewish theological speculation about the irredeemably evil present age and the consequent postponement of Deuteronomic blessings for the faithful to the age to come. In particular, Revelation is not a reaction to imperial ideology and practice but to an internal ecclesial struggle between John and "Jezebel" over accommodation to imperial society for the purpose of economic security, "Jezebel" advocating participation in the economy and John advocating, on the basis of a theological perspective in line with especially the *Epistle of Enoch*, complete separation. Though Mathews offers important food for thought, ultimately he fails to convince.

The book is organized in three major sections. In the first, Mathews assesses previous attempts at discovering the situation and traditions behind the Apocalypse, particularly as they pertain to John's critique of affluence and radical call to dissociate from Babylon. He finds wanting two broad approaches followed in the past, that of studies which focused John's critique on some aspect of the broader social world of the Asian churches and that which looked to John's use of the Hebrew Bible as the primary tradition or traditions that inform his message. As a result, Mathews suggests on the one hand that the situation behind Revelation may have been an internal theological conflict rather than an external social conflict and on the other that John's use of biblical texts in this conflict is not direct and may have been influenced by Second Temple theological ideas. This leads Mathews to propose further study on the theology of affluence in various Second Temple Jewish sources as a possible background to Revelation.

In the second main section of the book, Mathews conducts this study. He proceeds by examining approaches to wealth and poverty first in the apocalyptic Dead Sea Scrolls and then in other relevant Jewish literature. He is guided by the notion that apocalypses arise not out of sociological crises but out of the theological choice of marginal status by a community, and he thus attempts to ascertain the degree to which the language of affluence in these texts reflects theological ideas in response to rival interpretations or to dominant cultural assumptions. He also assumes that the Deuteronomistic theology of blessing for faithfulness was fundamental to all forms of Second Temple Judaism and that varying views of affluence in the literature will reflect an attempt by the community to understand its circum-

stances in view of this theology. Mathews finds that all the sources exhibit an awareness of the Deuteronomistic theology and that, while some anticipate blessing of the faithful in the present age alone, others view wealth as a feature of the present evil age and a hindrance to faithfulness to God. In these, the faithful can only expect blessing in the age to come. Especially in the *Epistle of Enoch* and the Qumran sectarian documents, the status of “poor” is a chosen marginalized status of the faithful while the “rich” are cast as categorically evil. Arrogant speech imputed to the wicked is a feature of this tradition.

In the third section of his work, Mathews investigates John’s perspective on wealth and poverty in four main passages in the Apocalypse (Revelation 2–3; 4–6; 13; and 18) and relates that to the earlier study on Second Temple traditions. Focusing on the distinction in Revelation 2–3 between the commendation of the “poor” churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia and the condemnation of the “rich” church of Laodicea and on John’s condemnation of “Jezebel” and the Nicolaitans, Mathews concludes that the appropriation of wealth is the primary theological issue between the rival prophets John and “Jezebel,” the rivalry itself being the most immediate crisis in the Asian churches. The imputed speech in the message to Laodicea and the reversal of ultimate wealth language in Smyrna and Laodicea may indicate that John has been informed by the Enochic tradition of the rejection of wealth for the faithful in this age.

This perspective is confirmed for Mathews to a degree in Revelation 4–6, where the attribution of riches to the slain Lamb, on the one hand, communicates the idea that wealth is legitimately gained only in the age to come after suffering and death in this age. On the other hand, literary emphasis on the third horseman, who represents the expectation of increasing avarice in the last days, communicates the evil of affluence in this age. As such, Revelation 4–6 challenges wealthy Christian readers to consider in which age their allegiance lies. Similarly, Mathews argues, in Revelation 13 the mark of the Beast is intended to distinguish those who engage in wealth production from the faithful, who by definition are disengaged from the imperial economy. This expectation is presented emphatically in Revelation 18 in the radical summons for the faithful to leave Babylon. The fornication that Babylon engages in with the merchants and rulers of the earth (a motif that links her to the sins of “Jezebel”) is the accumulation of wealth at the expense of “the blood of the saints.” John expects the saints, consonant with his perspective in Revelation 2–3, to dissociate from such a system. As such, Mathews concludes that John is in fact in contact with Second Temple traditions that reject wealth not based on the socio-historical situation of the community but on the theological paradigm of the present age and its systems as categorically evil. Mathews closes by suggesting that the practical outworking of John’s call to dissociation from the evil economy probably moved toward a sectarian expression similar to that in Qumran, where individual commerce was allowed but regulated toward the maintenance of the community rather than toward the accumulation of individual wealth.

Mathews’s assessment of Second Temple traditions concerning wealth is helpful. He effectively demonstrates traditions in *1 Enoch* and the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls of censure of an affluent and self-sufficient lifestyle as both a primal,

demonic corruption of humanity and a temptation to be avoided by the faithful, and of a postponement of the ultimate Deuteronomic blessing to the age to come. However, he moves from the cautiously stated and legitimate conclusion that, while these texts vituperate against such a lifestyle, they do not critique wealth per se, to the more strongly worded “wealth is not a feature of the present age for the faithful.” It seems to me that here he goes beyond the evidence.

Similarly, Mathews’s evaluation of Revelation overstates John’s concern with wealth. His primary evidence includes, on the one hand, the contrast between the commendation of Philadelphia and Smyrna and the condemnation of Laodicea and, on the other, the call to leave Babylon. Mathews does well to surface the call to leave Babylon as a major hortatory aspect of Revelation, and he was persuasive in arguing that the primary images of Babylon’s fornication are economic. In fact, he might have strengthened his overall case by beginning his investigation of the evidence in Revelation with this section and then moving to the messages to the churches and the other passages dealing with wealth. However, it is doubtful that even John’s critique of Babylon is because she is *wealthy* per se but because of her imperial *hubris* (cf. Rev 17:5; Dan 4:30). Her luxury is the means by which she entices the rulers of the earth, not ultimately sinfully to pursue wealth but to confirm her self-glorification in opposition to God and his people. Furthermore, Babylon is neither the only nor the main concern of John in Revelation; the persecuting Beast is. While Mathews attempts to show that John’s concern with the Beast is economic he clearly turns the evidence on its head. The mark of the Beast does not indicate participation in wealth creation but subservience to the Beast and its *idolatrous* claims. The Beast wages war against the saints and overcomes them, including their exclusion from the economy, because the saints refuse to worship it.

Mathews is similarly limited in his treatment of the messages to the churches. Though Smyrna’s economic distress is real and contrasted to its spiritual wealth and Laodicea is condemned for its self-satisfied affluence, the issue of wealth and poverty only overtly surfaces here in the oracles. Mathews tries to show that the “immorality” advocated by “Jezebel” and the Nicolaitans is in reality the pursuit of wealth as a means of security. However, his conclusion is neither required by the evidence. As well, “immorality” is absent as a major concern *throughout* the messages (certainly not clearly in those to Smyrna, Philadelphia, and Laodicea), as is the problem of Jezebel’s teaching, whatever it is (he virtually dismisses her advocacy of eating meat sacrificed to idols and does not consider how Jezebel connects her teaching to “the deep things of Satan”). Additionally, the churches in Smyrna and, apparently, Philadelphia are more immediately experiencing accusations from the Jews of the city, and it is this that seems to expose them to imprisonment and even death.

Riches, Poverty, and the Faithful is an interesting study of the Second Temple traditions that may have influenced John’s approach to wealth in Revelation. The work in the Second Temple literature is valuable, as are a number of other ancillary discussions in the book. However, Mathews’s focus is too narrow for the conclusions he draws about the Apocalypse, especially as he attempts to account not just for John’s wealth language but the situation behind Revelation more broadly. John

does have a concern for the ability of wealth to temper devotion to God, but he has other, more basic concerns in Revelation. In making the one dominant, or even exclusive, Mathews goes far beyond the evidence and as such is finally unpersuasive.

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Jesus is Lord, Caesar is Not: Evaluating Empire in New Testament Studies. Edited by Scot McKnight and Joseph B. Modica. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013, 224 pp., \$22.00 paper.

The last decade has witnessed a proliferation of studies on the negative posture toward Rome in the NT. Yet to what extent was the gospel opposed—either directly or indirectly—to Caesar, his empire, and the imperial cult? This book seeks to evaluate recent anti-imperial readings of the NT.

The book begins with an introduction by the editors. McKnight and Modica label the emerging scholarly fascination with Rome as “empire criticism,” which amounts to “developing an eye and ear for the presence of Rome and the worship of the emperor in the lines and between the lines of New Testament writings” (p. 16). McKnight and Modica then survey the basic methods operative in empire criticism and summarize the book’s content.

In chapter 1 David Nystrom offers an overview of Roman ideology and the imperial cult. According to Nystrom, Caesar was intentional in establishing his own supremacy, seeking “to shape how and what others thought of him” (p. 31). However, “rather than rely on brute force and the markers of personal ascendancy, the imperial strategy was to link the traditional ideology of Roman rule with the imperial house. Coins, statuary and the imperial cult all thrust the emperor before the people in ways that evoked continuity with this ideology” (p. 35). Nystrom’s essay, which rightly demonstrates the ubiquity of Rome and the extent of its propaganda, is essential reading for all those new to the topic.

In chapter 2 Judith Diehl provides a “wide-ranging sketch of who is saying what in empire criticism” (p. 20). Diehl’s chapter, the book’s longest (43 pp.), summarizes the historical-cultural milieu of the early empire (treated more fully by Nystrom) and surveys the counter-imperial aspects of various NT writings (done more comprehensively in subsequent chapters). Perhaps the most unique contribution Diehl makes to the larger project is her summary of “theoretical approaches.” In my view, the book would have been strengthened had Diehl concentrated on those approaches (esp. postcolonialism) and evaluated their utility with respect to empire criticism.

The remaining eight chapters assess how individual NT books have been studied by empire critics. Thus, in chapter 3 Joel Willitts evaluates empire criticism in Matthew’s Gospel, concentrating almost exclusively on the work of Warren Carter. While Willitts appreciates the way Carter’s reading focuses on the “concrete and everyday-ish existence of life” and while he concedes that Matthew’s Gospel has political implications (p. 93), Willitts concludes that Carter’s anti-imperial ap-

proach is too narrowly focused and overreaches in its exegesis: “Matthew was neither critiquing ‘empire’ per se nor singling out Rome uniquely. To take this view would be to inappropriately diminish Matthew’s message” (p. 97).

In chapter 4 Dean Pinter treats Luke’s Gospel by comparing the evangelist’s political critique with that of Josephus in *The Jewish War*. Through the comparison Pinter shows how referring to Jesus with politically weighty titles like Lord and King did not necessarily signal a competitive relationship between him and Caesar. Pinter also criticizes the search for “hidden transcripts”: not only are these kinds of concealed messages less appropriate for *private* correspondence like we find in Luke’s Gospel, but “the sheer brazenness of Luke’s assertion that Jesus is Lord and King uncovers the author as a rather poor code writer” (p. 109). In the end, Pinter concludes that “the implication that Luke draws an antagonistic, antithetical relationship between Lord Jesus and Lord Caesar seems to narrow the target too much against his broader interests of redemption, liberation and social critique of power” (p. 113).

In chapter 5 Christopher Skinner treats John’s Gospel, focusing on the work of Tom Thatcher, Warren Carter, and Byron Richey. Skinner is most sympathetic to Richey: “Apart from his exegesis of the prologue, Richey’s argument is balanced and makes a plausible case for John’s response to Rome while still situating the Gospel in a Jewish context that includes a break with the synagogue” (p. 127). Skinner concedes “that Rome is lurking in the background of the narrative.” However, “it is too reductionistic to focus on John’s meager presentation of Rome, while neglecting more explicit and seemingly more important points of emphasis” (p. 122).

In chapter 6 Drew Strait examines the imperial cult in Acts. In contrast to certain Lukan scholars, Strait downplays the anti-imperial significance of Jesus’ ascension and his being attributed the title “Savior.” Strait’s conclusions are similar to Pinter’s: “Luke’s Twitter feed is used for theological rather than revolutionary purposes. For Luke, Jesus is *the* Lord of all, a theological claim that has implications for Jews and Gentiles—the wealthy and the poor—and, yes, Caesar and his agents too” (p. 144, italics his).

In chapter 7 Michael Bird treats Paul’s epistle to the Romans. Bird’s essay seems to be among the most sympathetic to empire criticism in the volume. After surveying the work of several prominent empire critics, Bird examines Romans 1, 13, and 15, along with key terms and scriptural concepts Paul uses therein to evoke anti-imperialism. Bird concludes, “The universal vision of Paul’s gospel clearly competes with the Roman vision of its universal reign.... It is not simply the ‘parallel’ terminology that Paul uses like *Kyrios* and *euangelion*, but the apocalyptic and messianic narrative that such language is couched in that makes it tacitly counterimperial” (p. 161).

In chapter 8 Lynn Cohick treats Philippians. She begins by describing the presence of the imperial cult in Philippi and then critiques two competing, post-colonial approaches to Philippians—Paul as *anti-imperial* and Paul as *imperial* (demanding obedience from his churches). Cohick faults arguments based on hidden transcripts as being “practically nonrefutable,” since they rest “only on silence” (p.

174). She argues, “Rather than seeing Paul’s primary focus as contesting the claims of the Roman Empire, a better reading recognizes Paul’s concerns as located in the wider Jewish context and inner-Christian relations” (p. 179). She further maintains, with John Reumann, that Paul’s citizenship discourse in Philippians does not so much oppose Rome as it does reflect the language of his Judaizing opponents (“the enemies of the cross,” Phil 3:18). Some further reflection on mirror-reading is perhaps needed here.

In chapter 9 Allan Bevere examines Colossians and Philemon, interacting exclusively with Brian Walsh and Sylvia Keesmaat’s *Colossians Remixed* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004). Walsh and Keesmaat argue that anti-imperial sentiments are apparent in the Colossian philosophy, in Col 1:12–20 (evoking the exodus tradition), and in 2:15 (evoking Roman triumph). According to Bevere, the “largest problem” with this proposal is that “it takes the imperial implications of empire that can be legitimately read into Colossians and treats those implications as explicit pronouncements from the letter itself” (p. 188). Further, Walsh and Keesmaat submit that Paul’s request for Philemon to manumit Onesimus is anti-imperial insofar as it subverts the sociopolitical foundations of the empire. Yet Bevere rightly questions whether the letter to Philemon actually makes such a request and observes that Paul is more interested in renewed intra-church relationships than in subverting empire.

In chapter 10 Dwight Sheets treats Revelation. Sheets points out that, quite apart from the rest of the NT, “there is little debate about whether Rome is identified with much of [Revelation’s] symbolism” (p. 197). Nevertheless, he concludes that “Revelation is not primarily about whether empires are evil or even whether it is wrong for them to impose their authority on other peoples.... Through reinterpretation John presents a traditional portrait of the actions expected by the eschatological empire opposed to God—a portrait not unlike empires past and present—but he does not intend to offer a program of resistance for future generations” (p. 209). The book closes with a few concluding remarks from the editors.

This book does well in providing a balanced assessment of empire criticism in NT studies. McKnight and Modica are surely correct when they suggest that “the New Testament writers do indeed address the concerns highlighted by empire criticism. But...this is not their primary *modus operandi*”—which is to oppose the kingdom of Satan (p. 212). The book is readable, contains minimal footnoting, and requires no knowledge of Greek. Nevertheless, it will undoubtedly appeal more to scholars than to students and pastors. Readers will benefit especially from the volume’s direct engagement with recent scholarship. There are obvious gaps in its treatment of the NT. Noticeably absent are chapters on Mark’s Gospel, relevant Pauline Epistles (especially 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians), and the General Epistles. These omissions notwithstanding, the editors are to be thanked for assembling a fine team of contributors and for offering a sensible and timely response to this scholarly trend.

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A Peaceable Hope: Contesting Violent Eschatology in New Testament Narratives. By David J. Neville. Studies in Peace and Scripture 11. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013, xv + 288 pp., \$24.99 paper.

The latest entry in the highly regarded Studies in Peace and Scripture series sponsored by the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary is David Neville's *A Peaceable Hope: Contesting Violent Eschatology in New Testament Narratives*. Building on some of the illuminating work done in that series, Neville takes the discussion on peace and violence in the NT to a new level. The question that is the focus of his study is a contentious and critical one for NT ethics—how to explain the discrepancy between the NT picture of Jesus preaching non-retaliation and peace and the picture of God, or his agent, eschatologically exercising violent retributive judgment? Largely an exegetical study, Neville's ultimate goal, however, is the development of a hermeneutical principle by which the discrepancy stated above can be arbitrated.

Neville examines the moral vision of each of the NT narrative works (Matthew, Mark, Luke-Acts, John, and the Apocalypse) as well as their key eschatological passages with regard to their messages of peace and violence. He concludes that some books (Mark, Acts, John) present a consistent message of peace, while others (Matthew, Luke [somewhat], and the Apocalypse of John) evoke peace-violence tensions. However, even the latter works "contain within themselves" the "seeds for deconstructing their own eschatological violence" (p. 6; cf. p. 44). Neville finds in a *Christological criterion* the fulcrum from which to explain and resolve these phenomena. Neville argues that, while each of the canonical interpreters of the life of Jesus inherited a violent God image from the "standard apocalyptic scenario," each of them also re-visioned or muted that image under the influence of the peaceable mission and words of Jesus. Also important is the fact that there is detected in each writer the understanding that in Jesus there appeared the unique measure of God, in other words, the one who speaks in God's stead (in John, for instance, he exegeted God, in Matthew he is "God with us," etc.). Another element that Neville puts on the table is the idea that the end-expectation passages are some of the least clear as to the actual content of God's judgment (he uses words like "apparent," "residual," "beyond anyone's ability to know," and God's creative judgment [p. 41] in referring to them).

The Christological criterion can be stated quite simply: the life and words of Jesus, suffused by peace and a restorative outlook, must interpretively trump the eschatological passages that seem to convey violent retribution. In the chapter on Matthew, Neville states: "Whatever divinity we attribute to the 'God with us' displayed in Jesus' mission and message should surely take priority over whatever residual knowledge of God remains to be disclosed eschatologically" (p. 41). I hear Neville arguing that this principle functioned exegetically for the first-century evangelists as it was part of their interpretive repertoire (see pp. 6, 42), but also that it functions then and now as a theological principle (p. 41), for all Christians, in all ages. He propounds the Christological criterion partly in the introduction and partly in the conclusion to the chapter on Matthew, where, in the latter, he also engages

Ulrich Luz's views on "history of effects" quite helpfully for his position. The rest of the book then is an attempt to lay clear the re-visioning that is going on in the NT narrative books.

Lest anyone find Neville ready to dispense entirely with the concept of divine judgment, he is careful to delineate his views on that topic. He avers the Creator's prerogative to judge since without divine judgment a "might makes right principal" wins the day (p. 9). It is the kind of divine judgment that entails retribution or violence that Neville holds to be morally problematic. We humans often act the way we envisage God (p. 41). Thus, he rejects the position that disciples must act peacefully in the present as they defer to God's retribution in the eschaton (p. 2). Retributive judgment he also calls *morally corrosive*, for here God is found to resort to the very thing the cross came to disarm—evil (pp. 2–3). He argues that if we look closely enough, in most cases divine eschatological judgment in the NT is about reversal, rather than about retribution or recompense (p. 9).

Structurally, the book is composed of an introduction, three main parts, and concluding reflections. In part 1 he examines Matthew and Mark (chaps. 1 and 2), in part 2, the Lukan literature (chaps. 3, 4, and 5), and in part 3, the Johannine trajectories (chap. 6 on Gospel of John and chap. 7 on Revelation). In each chapter, he does three things: (1) he maps the moral vision of that NT book by elucidating how the author wraps peace themes in and around Jesus' ministry; (2) he exegetes the key end-expectation passages of that book; and (3) he brings together the findings in sections 1 and 2, contesting violent eschatology when it is found, with the purpose of demonstrating how it is an example of the Christological criterion at work.

The introduction is devoted partly to the moral problem of divine vengeance. In it, he interacts with J. D. Crossan and others about the kind of eschatology in the NT and its *essential* nature. Neville's fundamental conclusion is that the apocalyptic eschatology of the NT is not inherently violent (p. 7), a key assumption for the argument of the book.

The chapter on the Gospel of Matthew (chap. 1) is a key one since here he must wrestle with striking peace-violence tensions. As an example, the parabolic (end-time) sayings material (M material), found in the mouth of Jesus, is consistently violent (e.g. the "weeping and gnashing" phrase; p. 29). Matthew's key eschatological passage (Matt 24:29–44), on the other hand, is found to be remarkably benign (with an absence of battle or violence; p. 35). Again, Matthew is famously known for the story of the non-violent Jesus—in the Sermon on the Mount and in *explicit* rejections of violence in the Gospel (e.g. Matt 26:47–56). Neville's interaction here with Ulrich Luz's views on *history of effects* and the limitations of the historical-critical method is helpful in understanding his view and supports it well (pp. 41–42).

In Mark (chap. 2), Neville finds a coherent picture of peace, especially when viewed against Matthew. In Mark's moral vision, the emphasis is upon Jesus' reconception of social ethics, in the form of self-renunciation and social reversal (p. 50). While not exactly an ethic of peace, he says the underlying concept of love of neighbor argues against the validity of violence (pp. 50–51). On the eschatological

passages, Neville finds social reversal (Mark 8:38), rescue of the elect (Mark 13:26), and vindication (Mark 14:62), but a remarkable absence of violent retribution (p. 86). Mark 13:26, specifically, seems to be an example at the exegetical level of what Neville is talking about in arguing that the evangelists re-vision the violent God-image of the Hebrew Scriptures (p. 70).

Neville devotes three chapters to the Lukan literature—chapter 3 on the substantial peace themes in the Gospel, chapter 4 on the Gospel's eschatological texts, and chapter 5 on eschatological texts in Acts. Peace terminology at critical junctures of Jesus' ministry, accompanied by the theme of "divine visitation" (i.e. deliverance) also at critical junctures, suggests to Neville that peace is not only the way *to* God for Jesus and his disciples but also the way *of* God for his creatures (pp. 107–8, 111). In considering the blocks of eschatological instruction in Luke's Gospel (12:35–48; 17:20–37; 21:5–36), Neville admits to two incongruities that grate against the peace themes: (1) the indications of violent retribution in the first two eschatological blocks ("dicing up" [directed to Christian leadership] in 12:41–48 and refrains of "destruction" in the Noah and Lot similes in 17:22–29); and (2) Luke's view of Jerusalem's destruction as punishment for rejection of God's peace (pp. 249–50). The first he resolves by way of arguing that the enclosure of the blocks of eschatological instruction within the peace markers of the Gospel as a whole, as well as intratextual indicators of non-violence inside each block, serve to relativize the intimations of violence also found there (pp. 142–43). The argument he says is helped by his reading of the (mostly) violence-free passage 21:5–36 as Luke's programmatic statement on eschatology (p. 141). On the second incongruity, he all but throws up his hands, though he discusses some interesting possibilities in a conclusion (pp. 171–72). On Acts (chap. 5), he examines five sets of passages and finds peace indicators predominating in each.

On the Gospel of John (chap. 6), his arguments center upon the realized eschatology of the Fourth Gospel: it is by the crucifixion that evil has (already) been vanquished; 12:31 and 16:7–11 show what God's judgment looks like (p. 201). In the section on "Son of Man and Judgment," he proceeds exegetically and concludes that judgment always occurs in John in consequence of one's decision for or against the divine disclosure in Jesus (pp. 201–4).

Finally, on the Apocalypse of John (chap. 7), Neville sees the Lamb figure as the controlling vision for interpreting the violent rider passage of 19:11–21. The Lamb is at the center of the focal throne room vision and is also there described as the one who gave himself for others, an expression of love and peace (p. 232). He also argues that one cannot assume chapter 19 to be about literal violence (p. 236).

Neville's model is appealing and thought-provoking even to those who do not share his theological heritage. The key contribution of the work I see is his rigorous textual analysis of the operation of the Christological criterion in many NT narrative texts, as well as the statement of the criterion itself (which also arises from the texts). In addition, the book is also exemplary for the way Neville conducts his exegesis—its attention to detail and interaction with important scholarship and an unbendable honesty (again and again you hear him genuinely questioning his own positions and subjecting them to finer analysis). I also found his argument about

the theological *incommensurability* of divine eschatological violence and Jesus' peaceful mission persuasive; it made me see the difficulties in the "peaceful disciples-retributive God" position.

Nevertheless, I had disagreements with him in some of the texts where he found the violent God image being re-visioned. In the chapter on Luke's eschatological texts, Neville proposed a subverting of violent portions of those texts with peaceful ones as well as a largely peaceful reading of Luke 21. To my reading, all three of the texts hold out the specter of retribution (even violent retribution) *throughout* those blocks. I also had trouble seeing a re-visioning of violence by the peaceful Lamb figure that Neville proposed in his reading of the Apocalypse; the reverse many would find more likely. Moreover, while many of the details in Revelation 19 are not to be taken literally, nonetheless the gruesome details are difficult to explain away unless punishment of some kind is envisioned. I also had issues with Neville's suggestions on a number of passages in Acts. Do such objections overthrow his position? I suppose that the answer could be "yes," if enough such instances were found. Nevertheless, I applaud Neville's thought-provoking work that surely deepens our apprehension of the phenomenon of peace-violence tensions in the NT.

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The Question of Canon: Challenging the Status Quo in the New Testament Debate. By Michael J. Kruger. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013, 256 pp., \$24.00 paper.

Michael Kruger, President and Professor of New Testament at the Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, NC, has written two book-length monographs on the NT canon. In his latest one, he challenges what he considers to be the status quo regarding the formation of the NT canon: that the canon was "a later ecclesiastical development imposed on books originally written for another purpose" (p. 7). He calls this position the "extrinsic model." The rest of the book attempts to answer the question of whether this model *alone* accurately explains how and when the NT canon emerged. If the status quo is not as persuasive as previously thought, then he hopes his work will ultimately "allow the discipline to move forward in productive ways" (p. 25).

Kruger presents his case by arguing that the extrinsic model essentially operates under five major tenets. Each tenet is then given a one-chapter assessment and response. While responding to each tenet, he also puts forth his own model, which he labels the "intrinsic model." The intrinsic model pictures the canon as something that organically grew from within earliest Christianity. Thus, there was a canon even in the first century.

He concludes by noting three implications his work may have on modern canonical studies if his contentions are correct. First, it may remind us to question our presuppositions periodically. Second, it may reveal the inadequacy of consensus

positions, such as the extrinsic model. Third, it may give the intrinsic model an opportunity to complement the other models in future studies.

As a whole, Kruger's work is user-friendly, with many helpful reminders, transitions, and orientations throughout. It is up to date, with almost 40 pages of bibliographic information. More specifically, Kruger does a nice job varying the presentation of his position. At times, he provides a numerical layout. For instance, when he incorporates various canon definitions in order to describe the emergence of the canonical books he offers a three-stage outline. They were (1) written with divine authority; (2) recognized and used as Scripture; and (3) accepted via church-wide consensus. At other times, he summarizes his position with a mental image. For example, he ends his book by sharing, "in this sense [that the canon emerged quite naturally], the canon was like a seedling sprouting from the soil of early Christianity—although it was not fully a tree until the fourth century, it was there, in nuce, from the beginning" (p. 210). His straightforwardness in stating his own position against the status quo without all the typical academic nuancing and qualifiers is also laudable. For example, he clearly claims, "a written New Testament was not something the church formally 'decided' to have at some later date, but was instead the natural outworking of the early church's view of the function of the apostles" (p. 70).

At the same time, the following criticisms may improve future editions of this volume. After listing four consecutive questions in his preface, he says, "These are the questions this book is designed to address" (p. 7). The problem is, not one of the *four* questions match the *five* questions introduced in the table of contents. Similarly, several times throughout the book he explicitly states what "the goal" of the work is meant to be. Yet none of the occurrences matches each other. This is not to say they are all mutually exclusive. One may think he was merely expressing literary creativity in order to avoid redundancy—as is likely with the first two or three references, but certainly not all of them. Yet even if that is the case, it leaves the reader with the task of reconciling them at best, or misunderstanding one or all of them at worst. Thus, greater consistency—or clarification—regarding the ultimate "goal" and "questions" the work pursues might help.

Kruger asserts throughout the volume that his intrinsic model can be attained by way of a historical-critical approach—footnoting in the introduction that he only uses "intrinsic" to mean "historical development" throughout his book. Therefore, scholars do not need to avoid his model simply because of "the mistaken belief that it entails some theological commitments to doctrines such as inspiration, or to the special authority of the New Testament books" (pp. 209–10). Nevertheless, it seems to me that he was unable to avoid attaching theological elements to his model—especially when viewed holistically. My critique, though, is not about how, when, where, or why he may have incorporated theological factors into his model, but rather that he continually felt obligated to defend the model against such rare attacks. As he rightly describes during one of his earliest defenses, "More and more, scholars have recognized that theological and historical concerns are not easily separated, nor should they be" (pp. 41–42).

At times, he also seems to reach far for an illustration to support his point, when it ultimately does not add much to the conversation or strengthen his case. For example, he attempts to show a general correspondence between three canon definitions and three established categories of modern speech-act philosophy. This seems to be a rather forced and distracting illustration merely to emphasize that we do not have to choose only one definition. In other words, dropping several of these types of illustrations would have freed up more space—something he frequently states he lacks—for additional arguments, historical evidence, or both.

My last and primary critique here is more foundational and pervasive. Kruger emphasizes at many times and in many ways that one should not automatically adopt the status quo. Yet he does not seem to apply his own advice throughout the work. In almost every other area except the one he confronts, he follows the status quo. In regards to manuscript dating, orality, and literacy, to name just a few academic fields, he follows the status quo. On one occasion, he even acknowledges it in a footnote, “While such challenges [like the dating of certain papyri manuscripts] are welcome, in a brief volume such as this we can only go with the general consensus of scholars up to this point” (p. 97, n. 111).

From just this one example, at least four main issues surface for our consideration. First, following “the general consensus” is not the “only” option when brevity is a factor as he suggests, especially when the very book is challenging that specific academic pattern. He could just as easily have told us where he falls in relationship to the consensus position on each topic and then footnote something—even shorter—like this: “in a brief volume such as this I will not be able to defend each position I hold.” Second, the very author and work he notes in reference to “such challenges” against the status quo (i.e. Roger S. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009]) not only challenges the dating of certain manuscripts but also—like Kruger—those who merely follow the scholarly consensus regarding them. Third, this critique does not just apply to the footnotes; it applies to some of the historical data he mentions throughout. For example, only a few pages after the footnote just mentioned, he states in the body of his work, “Although Christians did not invent the codex, it was widely employed by them at least by the beginning of the second century, even in the face of a Greco-Roman and Jewish world that still vastly preferred the roll” (p. 100). Even though this is still representative of a status quo position, several notable scholars have adequately shown the need for modifying (or even abandoning) this assessment—not least of all several works Kruger notes in his bibliography (e.g. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt*, pp. 70–90; esp. 72–73). Fourth, if scholars treat his work in similar fashion (by adding it to a footnote while simply stating that they must just follow the status quo), then none of his three hopeful implications noted above will come to fruition.

Despite these few criticisms, Kruger has provided us with another useful and challenging contribution to this flourishing field of study. He rightly emphasizes giving greater weight to the historical reality that the canon’s development was early and natural, as well as not automatically adopting one model over and against all

others. Students, pastors, and scholars alike will benefit greatly from this volume for years ahead.

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Introduction to "Gnosticism": Ancient Voices, Christian Worlds. By Nicola Denzey Lewis. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, xxiv + 305 pp., \$39.95 paper.

Nicola Denzey Lewis has performed an excellent service to the academic world by providing the first-ever monograph on the topic of "Gnosticism" written specifically for the purpose of classroom instruction. This is not to say that there are no other volumes that are useful in the classroom, since there are various translations of the primary sources (e.g. the classic work edited by James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* [4th ed.; Leiden: Brill, 1996], as well as the more recent translation by Marvin Meyer, *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* [New York: HarperOne, 2007]), and very helpful secondary works (such as Birger A. Pearson's *Ancient Gnosticism* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007] and David Brakke's *The Gnostics* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010]). However, none of these was written specifically for the purpose of introducing students, more specifically undergraduates, comprehensively to this exciting and difficult subject matter. When used along with an up-to-date translation of the Nag Hammadi library, this volume provides a great resource for a course on Gnosticism or the diverse expressions of the second-century Christian world.

From the start, Lewis demonstrates that she is a master teacher. Having taught at several Ivy League and first-tier academic institutions, including her most recent post at Brown University, Lewis brings to this volume the experience of an extended trial-and-error process of discerning what works and does not work in the classroom, the awareness of what questions students ask or should be asking when engaging Gnostic literature, as well as an abundance of resources in terms of charts, pictures, glossaries, sidebar articles, and brief annotated bibliographies for each subject area. Each of the twenty chapters addresses a pertinent topic within Gnostic studies, ranging from the definition of "Gnosticism" to various schools of Gnostic thought (e.g. Sethian, Valentinian, and Thomasine) to literary types among Gnostic literature (e.g. prayers, Gospels, creation myths [see the appendix], and apocalypses). A glossary and index at the end add to the usefulness of this volume.

Nearly every tractate from the Nag Hammadi library is discussed, along with other modern discoveries such as *The Gospel of Mary* and *The Gospel of Judas*. Each chapter provides an introduction that eases students into the subject matter with contemporary relevance, an analysis of primary works and their religious, historical, and sociological context and significance, as well as a review of contemporary scholarly debates related to each topic. Though this text could be used effectively on the introductory level in a graduate or seminary classroom, it is most suited to upper-level undergraduate students as the author purposed it in this direction with a conversational tone and a highly-readable, didactic style. Lewis keeps student

interest by highlighting subtle conflicts within the apostolic community, conspiracy theories of cover-ups and persecutions perpetrated by the proto-orthodox church, the mystery and intrigue of Gnostic portrayals of the divine feminine and various sacramental rites, as well as modern manifestations of Gnostic ideas within contemporary film, literature, and music. Her scholarly yet speculative reconstructions of “how-it-might-have-happened” (e.g. the development of Gnostic communities) and “what-it-might-have-looked-like” (e.g. a Sethian liturgical mass, cf. pp. 169–70) are interspersed throughout the volume and are generally quite insightful and highly possible.

Introduction to “Gnosticism” is an excellent snapshot of the current state of the scholarly study of “Gnosticism” and its accompanying literature. It reflects the important questions about the legitimacy of the category of “Gnosticism” raised at the turn of the millennium by Michael Allen Williams’s *Rethinking “Gnosticism”* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) and Karen King’s *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) as well as the recent challenge of David Brakke, which claims that there were communities of “Christians” in the second century who were called and/or called themselves “Gnostics.” Three generations of Gnostic scholarship seem evident in the text: the classic school that saw Gnostics and Gnosticism as a distinct religion or category of religious thought related to people and literature vis-à-vis orthodox Christianity in the ancient world; the revisionist school that challenged not merely the orthodox-heretical bifurcation but even the category of “Gnosticism” itself; and the current scholarly conversation that is providing a synthesis of carefully nuanced definitions and categorizations reflecting the complex world of early Christianity that the Nag Hammadi codices revealed and subsequent scholarship has exposed.

Lewis, who studied under Elaine Pagels at Princeton, is a relatively generous and thoughtful scholar; yet, as is true of any study, her volume reflects a posture that rests upon numerous historical and theological foundations. These include: the world of ancient Christianity is highly complex and political and is more accurately portrayed by the plural term “Christianities”; the classic view that privileges orthodoxy and canonical texts is outdated and anachronistic, and there should be a level ground when assessing communities, literature, and commitments in this period; the apostolic community was not unified and various communities were generated by their own understandings and interpretations of Jesus and his teachings reflecting diverse “apostolic” authorities; the Christianities that were birthed in the ancient world were not simply generated by Jewish messianic categories and impulses, but were also deeply influenced by Platonic, Hermetic, and pagan ideas and sources, many of which pre-dated the various Jesus movements. This list could go on, but these items give a relatively clear picture of the state of affairs represented in this volume and in the wider academy related to the study of the early Christian world.

While all of these presuppositions should be carefully weighed and considered and some of them embraced with careful nuance, Lewis clearly challenges and is relatively dismissive of the commitments of historical orthodoxy and even more so of evangelicalism. This posture is reflected in the manner in which she presents the “classic” position as well as in the very select bibliographies that she provides at the

end of each chapter, in which evangelical scholars such as Edwin Yamauchi, Nicholas Perrin, and the late David Scholer receive no mention. Yet, to be fair, it must be admitted that there are very few evangelical scholars who have engaged this field of study, that Lewis makes no claim to being comprehensive in her bibliographies, and that she could not possibly have addressed all positions in a general work of this nature. Nevertheless, the evangelical voice is missing, and its absence allows a consensus to form that is absent of its emphases, evidences, interpretations, and claims. At one point, Lewis even displays a sense of incredulity regarding the evangelical commitment to inerrancy, explaining to her readers, “Some people have been taught that the scriptures are not to be questioned but accepted at face value. Certain modern Christian denominations, in fact, teach biblical inerrancy—the Bible is never wrong and contains no mistakes and must be read as literal truth” (p. 138). While her portrayal is a bit of a caricature, she could have added that there are (“so-called”?) scholars who hold such views as well, in fact, a whole society of them!

With those observations made, *Introduction to “Gnosticism”* could be used effectively in an upper-level religion class or in a church history/historical theology course at a Christian university or an evangelical seminary. The absence of evangelical voices might even provide an impetus to some faculty and/or ambitious students to engage the complex world of Gnostic ideas, literature, and history, filling a gap in the scholarly discussion that is so prominently revealed in this volume. This is particularly relevant and urgent as scholars like Lewis make the world of “Gnosticism” more accessible to the educated and informed public, highlighting the necessity of evangelical scholars to engage this subject matter in service to the church, academy, and culture. “Gnosticism” and the scholarship surrounding it raises questions of faith and history that can be ignored only to the great peril of orthodox expressions of Christianity. Meeting these challenges head-on in the classroom is our scholarly duty, and Lewis’s volume provides an excellent resource that will enable those questions to arise naturally and provocatively. The remaining question is our readiness and willingness to engage them in a thoughtful and thorough scholarly manner.

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